THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING®

IS THE TIME NOW?

LO' ALVAREZ AND JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR. REMAIN ON A COLLISION COURSE

IS PACQUIAO DECLINING?
SOFT OPPOSITION MIGHT BE MASKING SLIDE

Q&A WITH NONITO DONAIRE
'I'M READY TO CONQUER NEW WORLDS'

ANDRE THE GIANT
WARD OUTCLASSES FROCH TO CAP SUPER SIX RUN

COTTO'S REVENGE
HE DOMINATES MARGARITO TO PROVE HIS METTLE

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POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

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The RING

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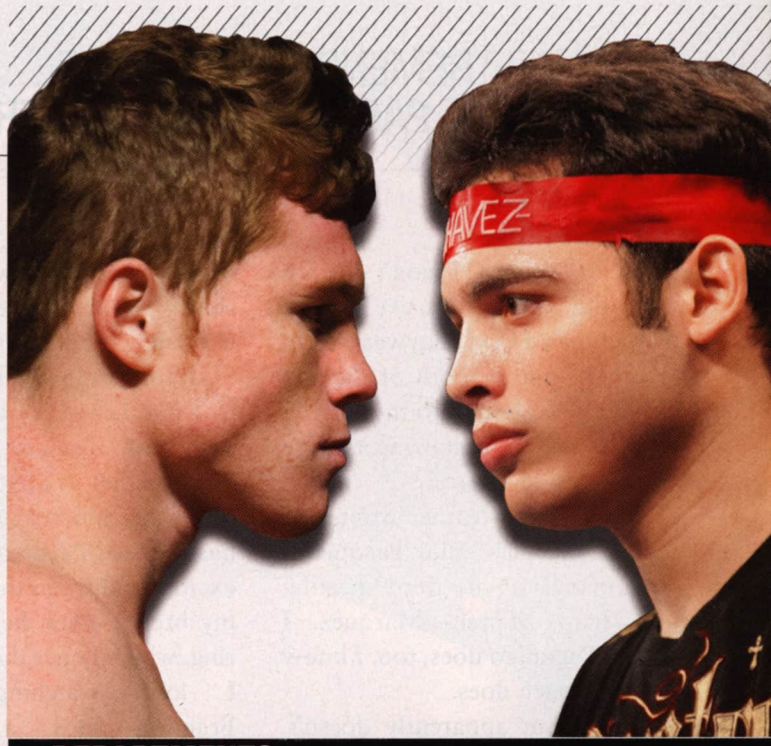

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2012 HAS TREMENDOUS PROMISE ... WITH OR WITHOUT PACQUIAO-MAYWEATHER

By **Michael Rosenthal**

I'm an optimist. I won't give up on the painfully elusive Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight until one or both of them is too feeble to climb into the ring.

That said, I'm starting to lose both hope and interest.

I think Mayweather wants the fight, particularly after Pacquiao's performance in his third meeting with Juan Manuel Marquez. I suspect Pacquiao does, too. I know Freddie Roach does.

Bob Arum apparently doesn't. He loathes the thought of working with Mayweather and his promotional representative, Golden Boy. And most believe he doesn't want to put his cash cow at risk as long as he can make a fortune fighting others.

The fact that Mayweather' 90-day jail sentence for domestic violence – originally set to begin in January – was pushed back to June 1 opened the door for a possible showdown on May 5, the date Mayweather reserved at the MGM Grand. Again, though, many obstacles remained at press time.

So if the fight doesn't happen?

That thought would've been depressing for me even six months ago. To waste such an incredible opportunity – a clash between the two best fighters of their era that would captivate the sports world – was unthinkable.

Now it's more palatable. The endless conversation about Pacquiao-Mayweather has grown old, as if there simply isn't anything else to say about it. Frankly, it has become boring.

I, for one, am shifting my focus to a number of young fighters who will soon displace Pacquiao and Mayweather as kings of the sport.

I think Nonito Donaire already has eclipsed Pacquiao as the most-exciting fighter in the world. I hold my breath when he steps into the ring, which I once did for Pacquiao. I love watching throwback Brandon Rios, a superhuman strongman who pounds on you until you collapse. Think a smaller version of Rocky Marciano.

Andre Ward might turn out to be the best of the bunch. I watched in awe as he cruised through the Super Six World Boxing Classic, which is incredible given the level of his competition.

I have an eye on youngsters Adrien Broner and Gary Russell Jr., whose combination of athleticism, skill and ferocity endow them with unlimited potential and make them thrilling to watch.

And there are so many more with the ability to stir the masses – Timothy Bradley, Lucian Bute, Chad Dawson, Robert Guerrero, Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, Amir Khan, Yuriorkis Gamboa ... it's a long list.

So, yes, if Pacquiao-Mayweather happens, great. If not, we have so much more to look forward to going into 2012.

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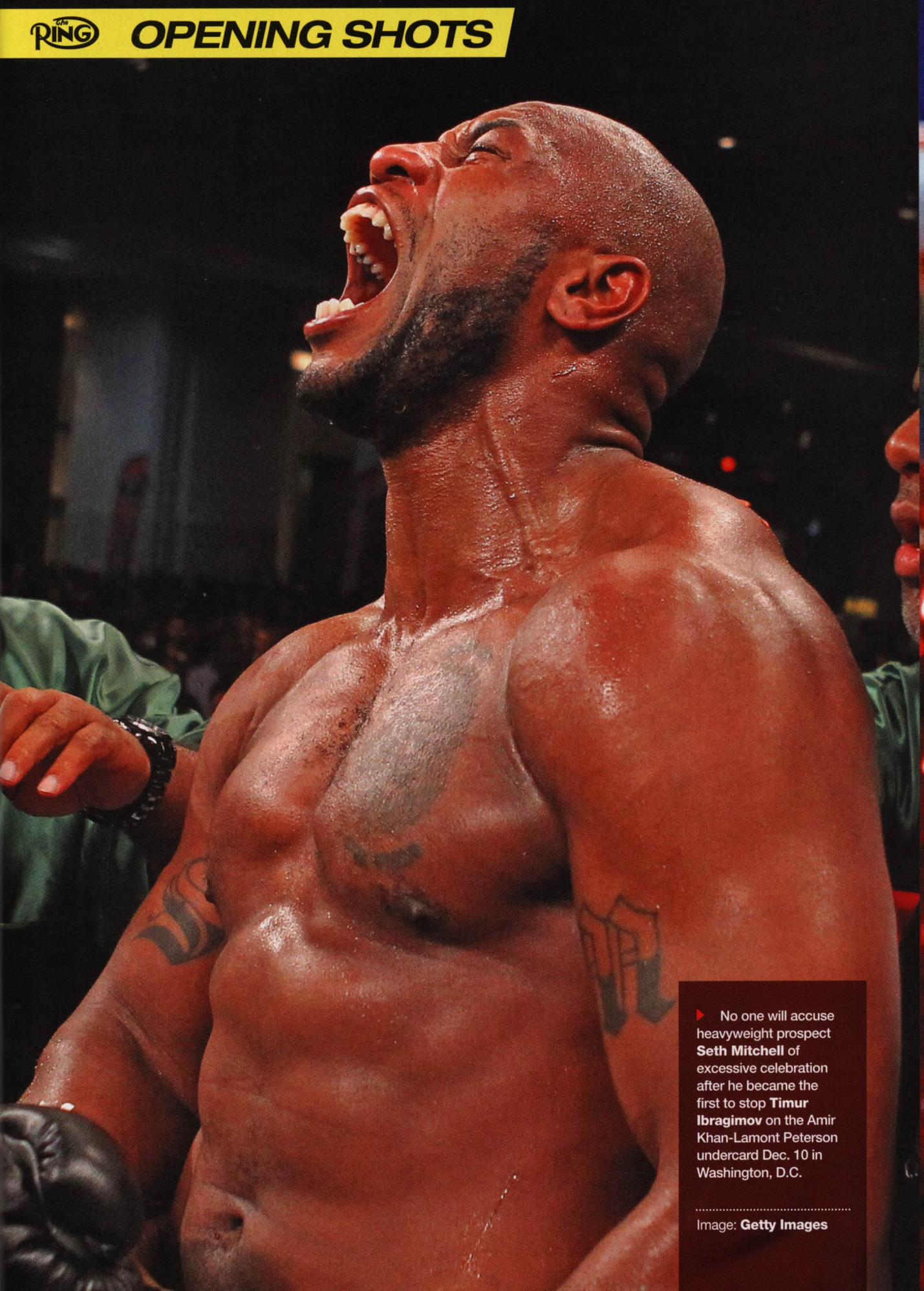


No one will accuse heavyweight prospect **Seth Mitchell** of excessive celebration after he became the first to stop **Timur Ibragimov** on the Amir Khan-Lamont Peterson undercard Dec. 10 in Washington, D.C.

Image: **Getty Images**

Antonio Margarito didn't need exhortation from trainer **Robert Garcia.** The Mexican wanted to continue fighting Miguel Cotto with only one good eye Dec. 3 in New York.

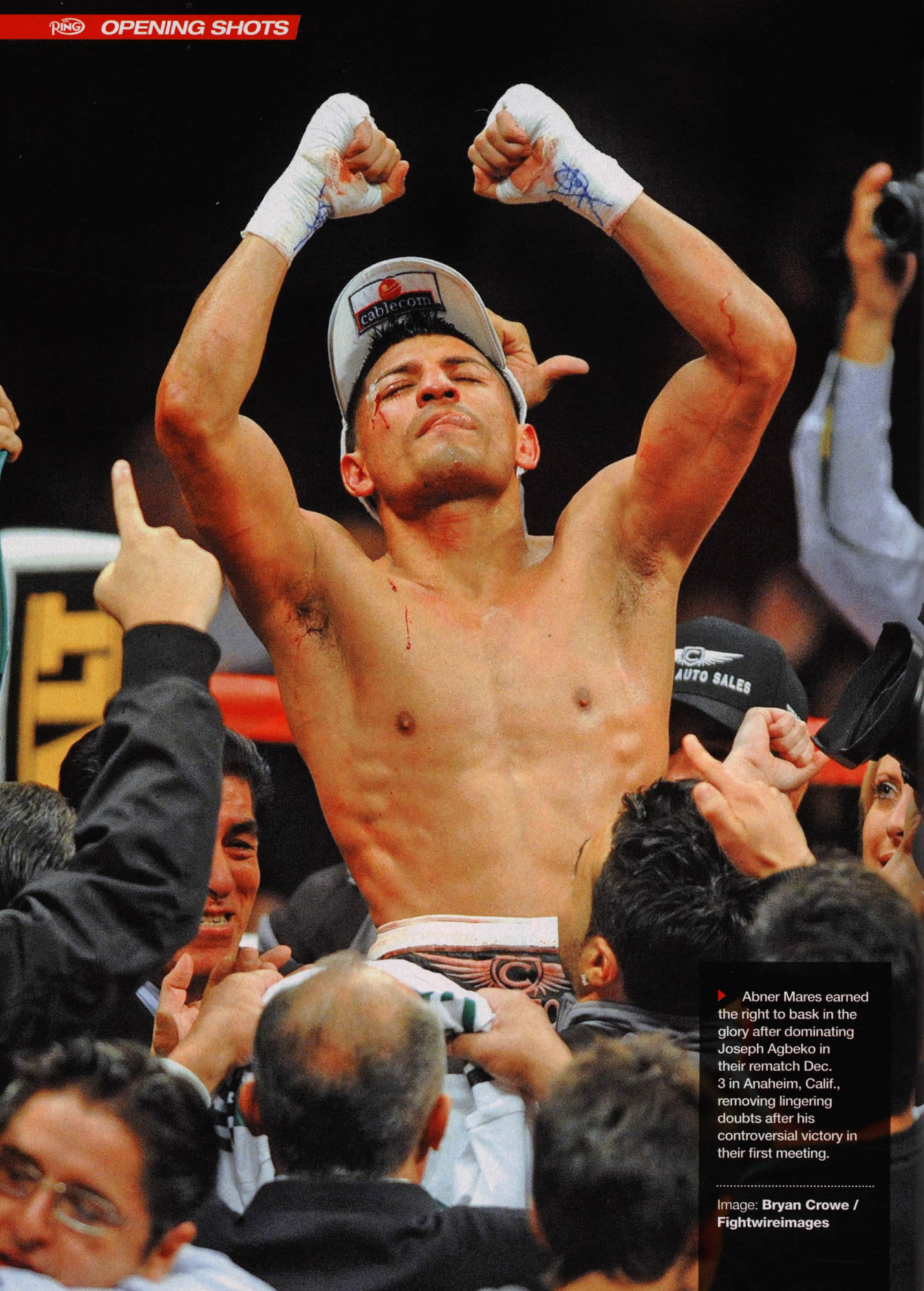
Image: **Getty Images**

▶ **Amir Khan** (left) landed his share of nasty shots but nothing could prevent a determined **Lamont Peterson** from emerging with a major upset on Dec. 10 in front of Peterson's hometown fans in Washington, D.C.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Anne Sophie Mathis (right) of France stunned **Holly Holm** and her hometown fans in Albuquerque by scoring a seventh-round knockout Dec. 2 at the Route 66 Casino.

Image: **Chris Cozzone / Fightwireimages**



Abner Mares earned the right to bask in the glory after dominating Joseph Agbeko in their rematch Dec. 3 in Anaheim, Calif., removing lingering doubts after his controversial victory in their first meeting.

Image: **Bryan Crowe / Fightwireimages**

IT'S ABOUT TIME

It's time for Julio Cesar Jr. and Saul "Canelo" Alvarez to square off.

Both young stars are getting better with each fight and have plenty of fights under their belt. Both are highly popular. Chavez is slowly getting out of his legendary father's shadow. "Canelo" packs a mean punch and is quickly becoming one of the most popular fighters in the sport.

While Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao keep us guessing whether they will ever tangle, why not make this fight between two Mexican champions?

Stephen Donatelli
Verona, Pa.

10-10 SHOULDN'T BE A NO-NO

I think if judges would score more rounds 10-10, we would have more accurate decisions.

Let's say judge A scores a close round for fighter 1 while judge B scores that same close round for fighter 2. Such a disparity occurs frequently. But the round was close, so shouldn't the scores reflect that? When a fighter does clearly win a round, he is rewarded with a 10-9, but when the round is close, a 10-10 would avoid giving an unfair advantage in the final score. Shouldn't the points for a clearly-won round mean more than points that might go either way in a very close round? In the same way, I think judges should also be more liberal with 10-8 rounds: when a fighter dominates a round, he should get more credit for that. Now, I'm not proposing that judges should be all over the map, I'm just saying call a spade a spade. I still think 10-9 should be the standard, but just for those rounds that are either quite close, or very clearly swept by one fighter I think a 10-10 or 10-8 is in order.

Justin Hackman
Denver

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KHAN DEDUCTIONS LEGIT

Surely I can't be the only one utterly disgusted by Jim Lampley's incessant cheerleading for Amir Khan in the Peterson fight, can I?

I wholeheartedly agree that the first point deduction (for pushing) seemed a little premature, but Khan had been warned several times. When he continued to push – and he did – the second point deduction was a no-brainer. And when you factor in the fact Khan regularly pushed down on the back of Peterson's neck, held Peterson's hand and extended his forearm into Peterson's face while hitting him with his other hand ...

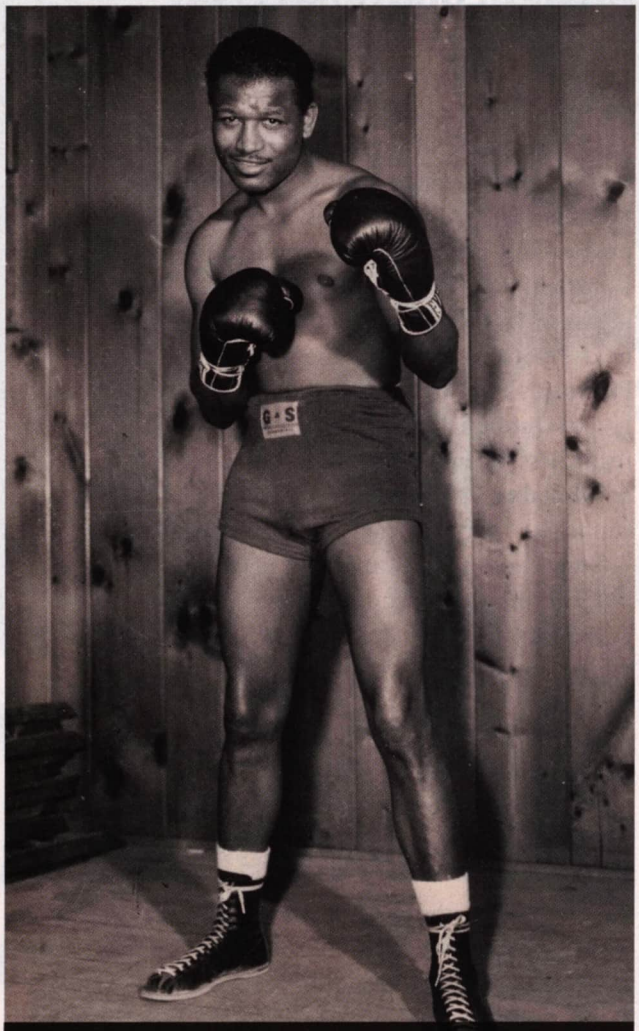
An infraction is an infraction is an infraction, regardless of whether or not the offending party has an alphabet belt or a contract with HBO. And for a supposed "play-by -play" man to freely use the term "home cooking" because his network's fighter came out on the short end of the decision is incredibly disrespectful to Lamont Peterson, who put on a hell of a fight and deserves credit.

Jeremy Norris
Baton Rouge, La.

INJURIES DIDN'T HURT SUPER SIX

I agree with those that have come out praising Showtime's Super Six tournament. Many, though, are qualifying their remarks by pointing to injuries as an example of where it fell short. I disagree with those assessments. The injuries, while unfortunate, added some value for the viewers since additional top-quality fighters had to be added to the field. I'd like to see tournaments in every weight class with as many as 10 fighters, depending on the depth of the division. This would guarantee that we would be able to see top quality, competitive fights all of the time. The real problem with boxing is having way too many uncompetitive fights where everyone knows the results before the first bell rings. Keep up the good work Showtime. And please take note, HBO.

Jim Factor
Danville, Calif.



Meet Walker Smith Jr. Image: **THE RING**

QUICK QUIZ

It's common knowledge that Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. changed his name to Muhammad Ali. Give the ring name for each of the fighters below.

A. Walker Smith Jr.
B. Joseph Barrow
C. Gerardo Gonzalez
D. Benjamin Leiner
E. Archibald Lee Wright
F. Thomas Rocco Barbella
G. Arnold Cream
H. Giuseppe Beradinelli
I. Guglielmo Papaleo
J. Beryl Rosofsky
K. Noah Brusso
L. Eligio Sardinias

HOBBY HORSE

From time to time, I ask boxing luminaries about their greatest moment in a sport other than boxing. Dr. Margaret Goodman served as medical director and chief ringside physician for the Nevada State Athletic Commission. But she has fond memories of a triumph away from the ring.

"I have a full-time practice as a neurologist," she said. "But when I resigned from the commission [in 2007], I needed something to fill the void. My mother had taken me riding a few times when I was very young. I'd only done it once or twice after that. But I love animals, and Flip [longtime friend Dr. Flip Homansky] bought me a horse."

"Mo was 4 years old when we got him. I'm very competitive, so it wasn't enough for me just to pleasure ride. I wanted to do English riding, which is based on using your body and legs rather than the reins to control the horse. The choices I had for a discipline were dressage, which is very technical; eventing, which I'm not insane enough to do because it's like steeplechase times 10; and hunter competition, which is slow jumping where the emphasis is on form and the beauty of the jump. I chose hunter competition."

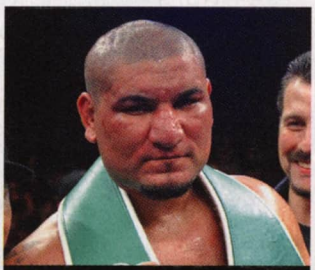
"Mo and I entered our first competition in Los Angeles in May 2008 and won two first places. That was a great moment for me; although if you want me to spill my guts, most of the competitors were between the ages of 7 and 12. One of the kids was a snotty little brat who was riding what looked like a $100,000 horse. After I won, she started whining, "It's not fair; she's older than we are." And I told her, "Grow up, kid; this is life."

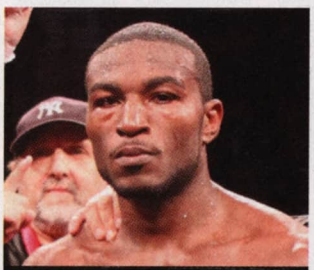
Dr. Margaret Goodman evidently is multi-talented.

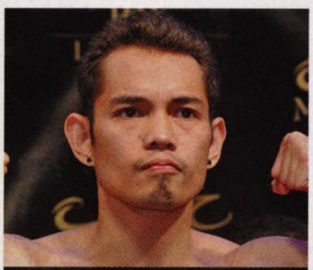
MOST EXCITING

Many boxing publications compile "pound-for-pound" lists. Here, in alphabetical order, is my list of the most exciting fighters in boxing today. The list is limited to boxers who have been seen by a national television audience and have world-class potential or have already reached the elite level. It features action fighters with a bias toward those who can punch. They aren't necessarily the best fighters in boxing. But when any of them is in a *competitive* match-up, I want to see it. In alphabetical order:

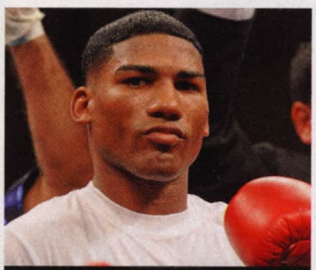
TOMASZ ADAMEK


CHRIS ARREOLA

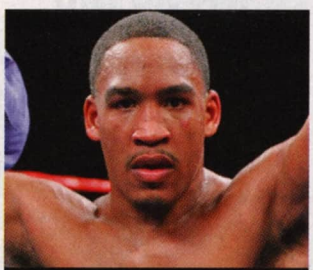

TAVORIS CLOUD

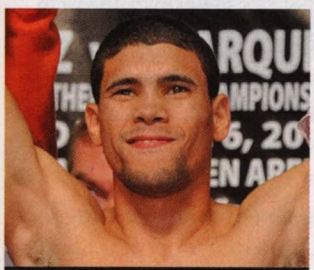

NONITO DONAIRE

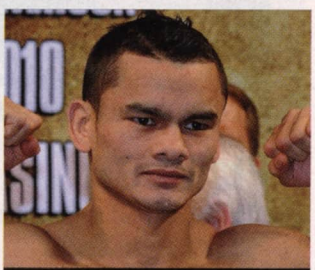
CARL FROCH


YURIORKIS GAMBOA

AMIR KHAN


JAMES KIRKLAND


JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ


MARCOS MAIDANA

SERGIO MARTINEZ

VICTOR ORTIZ

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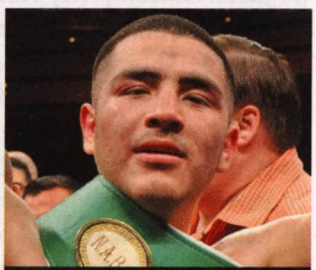
MANNY PACQUIAO


BRANDON RIOS

The list is subjective. So let's hear what you, the readers, have to say in response.

QUIZ ANSWERS: Their rings names were: (A) Sugar Ray Robinson; (B) Joe Louis; (C) Kid Gavilan; (D) Benny Leonard; (E) Archie Moore; (F) Rocky Graziano; (G) Jersey Joe Walcott; (H) Joey Maxim; (I) Willie Pep; (J) Barney Ross; (K) Tommy Burns; (L) Kid Chocolate.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at **thauser@rcn.com**. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

JABS & STRAIGHT WRITES By Thomas Hauser

IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

MYSTERY INK

Freddie Roach has a tattoo of a Celtic cross with the legend "Five Angels" on his left biceps. How did that come about?

"I got it on my 35th birthday, which means I was old enough to know better," Roach says. "I wasn't drunk. I don't know why the f--- I did it, except I was dating a girl who had a lot of tattoos and it seemed like a good idea at the time. That's life. It's better than being in a bad car accident."

AWE STRUCK

Cameron Dunkin has become one of boxing's most successful managers. Recently, he reminisced about the first professional fight he ever saw:

"I was in the first grade, 9 years old. My father was a truck driver and not a nice man. He was physically abusive more often than I care to remember, so I spent a lot of time out of the house. I had a friend named Brian Johnson who lived down the street. His father took him to pro wrestling from time to time. This time, he took Brian to the fights, and they asked me if I wanted to come along."

"I didn't know what to expect. The fights were at the Olympic Auditorium [in Los Angeles], which is a small place but it looked very big to me then. I remember walking into the arena, seeing the ring and thinking this was going to be special. We had good seats, about six rows back. Some of the fighters were very young but they showed no fear at all. I thought it was incredible that they had the guts to get in the ring and do what they did with everybody watching. It was a thrill for me. My heart was pounding the whole time. I didn't want it to end; and it hasn't. I've been hooked on boxing ever since."

10

A monthly boxing list. This month: 10 sets of three or more siblings who fight or fought professionally.

1. **Zivic:** 5 – Fritzie, Jack, Pete, Joe, Eddie
2. **Weaver:** 4 – Mike, Floyd, Lloyd, Troy
3. **Byrd:** 4 – Antoine, Chris, Patrick, Tracy*
4. **Fullmer:** 3 – Gene, Don, Jay
5. **Quarry:** 3 – Jerry, Mike, Bobby
6. **Mayweather:** 3 – Roger, Floyd, Jeff
7. **Eubank:** 3 – Chris, Peter, Simon
8. **Judah:** 3 – Zab, Daniel, Josiah
9. **Spinks:** 3 – Leon (Calvin), Darrel, Cory
10. **Kameda:** 3 – Koki, Daiki, Tomoki

*–*Female*

Anthony Peterson likes to listen to the King of Pop's music. Image: **Getty Images**

PLAYLIST

The bands and singers boxing people are listening to

ROBERT GUERRERO
Jason Aldean ("My Kind of Party")
Michele Gates ("The Tan Lines")
George Thorogood ("Bad To The Bone")
Rick James ("Give It To Me", "Mary Jane")

ANTHONY PETERSON
Sam Cooke
Michael Jackson (slow songs)
Smokey Robinson
Frankie Lymon
Earth Wind & Fire

HOLLY HOLM
Led Zeppelin
James Brown
O.A.R.
Lady Gaga
Britney Spears

Former heavyweight contender **George Chuvalo** (right) was impressed with **Joe Frazier's** oft-overlooked defensive skills.

Image: **THE RING**

GEORGE CHUVALO

By **Corey Erdman**

In an era of heavyweight fighters blessed with ability seldom seen before or since, George Chuvalo stood out in one category: toughness.

The Canadian slugger finished his 23-year professional run with a 73-18-2 record, including 64 knockouts. Chuvalo failed to go the distance a few times but was never off his feet in 93 contests, including meetings with some of the greatest heavies to ever lace up a pair of mitts.

He twice challenged for the world heavyweight title, coming up short both times. But he has received his share of accolades, including THE RING Magazine's 1965 Fight of the Year (against Floyd Patterson), as well as an induction into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame and a presentation of the Order of Canada.

In his retirement, he still puts his jaw to use, heading the Fight Against Drugs campaign, and is known as one of the sport's greatest storytellers.

Chuvalo spoke with THE RING and revealed his greatest opponents in 10 essential categories.

BEST FIGHTER: MUHAMMAD ALI

Most people would say he's the greatest heavyweight champion. I wouldn't disagree with that, because if you took all the heavyweight champions, going back to John L. Sullivan, to Mike Tyson and up to the Klitschkos, and put them in a round-robin tournament, I think Ali would come out on top. On his best day, I don't think any of those guys would beat him. That's what most people think, it's not necessarily an original thought.

BEST BOXER: MUHAMMAD ALI

He was good at avoiding punches. I hit him a lot, too. Of all the guys I fought, the quickest puncher? Ali. Quickest foot-wise? Ali. Punching-wise, not so much. I knew he could punch pretty well if I he got set, but he never got set with me. I never got hit with a real good shot by Muhammad, really.

BEST PUNCHER: MIKE DEJOHN

He set a couple records on the old Friday Night Fights. He knocked out Alex Miteff in 77 seconds and Charlie Powell in 47 seconds, one shot, bink! Down, out. A real sharp puncher, a good uppercut, and a good hook, too. I got hit with a right uppercut, and I didn't think too much about it at the time, but it's the only time I saw my legs even dip a little bit. Half an inch. I had never seen that before in a fight!

George Chuvalo is a popular speaker these days at functions in and out of boxing. Image: **Steve Samoyedny / Fightwireimages**

QUICKEST HANDS: MUHAMMAD ALI

Floyd Patterson was the second fastest fighter I ever fought. He kind of fooled me, actually. I never saw him move with anybody else, he always stayed in front of guys. But he had a spy in camp, a guy by the name of Greatest Crawford. I've never told this to many people. We were at Kutsher's, a Jewish resort in upstate New York and he was training with me. And the hotel operator told my manager that she would hear Greatest Crawford reluctantly give out information to Dan Florio or Nick Florio, one of the brothers who were looking after Patterson. We made a mistake of taking in a New York fighter who was acquainted with Patterson. To his credit, he didn't want to say anything, but they kind of forced him to say things. What he told them was you can't stand in front of me, you've got to move around. Patterson wouldn't do well with me standing in front of me.

QUICKEST FEET: MUHAMMAD ALI

Muhammad, no question. Those days, heavyweights didn't move around very much. The only heavyweights I ever saw move around the ring before him really were Jersey Joe Walcott and a blown up light heavyweight, Billy Conn.

BEST DEFENSE: JOE FRAZIER

He bobbed and weaved so well, and he slipped punches and countered very well. A lot of people will be shocked that I said that, because most people wouldn't think of Joe as being that good defensively. But he slipped punches very well, especially in the early part of his career. He moved his head extremely well coming side to side at you, left to right, and fighting out of a crouch. That's tough to hit.

BEST CHIN: MUHAMMAD ALI

I know I had Ali hurt one time. Angelo Dundee told me he was out, Muhammad told him he was out in the second fight, but I didn't know I hit him that hard! I know the punch he's talking about. I hit him right on the point of the chin and he wobbled a little bit, but I thought he was fooling around because I didn't think I hit him that hard. Ali could take a good shot, though. I believe that's the first time I've ever been asked that question, who had the best chin you ever fought? Usually when I hit someone on the button, something happened.

BEST JAB: MUHAMMAD ALI

He had the quickest jab, anyway. He just got it out there quicker, it was tougher to slip than most guys'.

STRONGEST: GEORGE FOREMAN

George was the strongest guy I ever fought, for sure. I remember when we fought, we got inside and he gave me a shove back—I'd never fought anybody who could push me back. If you stayed close to George, you could do OK. In close, he couldn't get off that way, so he'd have to push you, he'd try to back you up a little bit to get some room to fire.

SMARTEST: MUHAMMAD ALI

Ali, I suppose. Jimmy Young was smart because he would stand in front of you and almost dare you to hit him. I never fought Jimmy Young, but I admire his defensive skills. He was the most-skilled fighter defensively, especially in the heavyweight division, that I'd ever seen. ■

Actor **Ryan O'Neal** (pictured here with daughter Tatum recently) is more than just a boxing fan; he managed the career of former welterweight contender **Hedgeman Lewis.**

Image: **Getty Images**

CELEBRITIES WHO ARE DEVOTED TO THE SWEET SCIENCE. THIS MONTH:

OSCAR-NOMINATED ACTOR

RYAN O'NEAL

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Actor Ryan O'Neal played fighter Eddie "Kid Natural" Scanlon in the successful 1979 comedy *The Main Event*, with co-star Barbra Streisand.

If O'Neal appeared to be comfortable in the boxing scenes, you shouldn't be surprised. He has been around the sport much of his life, fighting in the streets as a kid, learning to box in the gym when he was a teenager and later managing welterweight contender Hedgeman Lewis.

O'Neal, who turned 70 in April, remains a big fan of boxing. And he's still active: He was scheduled to be a contestant on Season 13 of *Dancing with the Stars* but had to pull out because he hasn't fully recovered from recent knee-replacement surgery. He hopes to take part in the show's following season.

Meanwhile, a recent conversation with THE RING was no strain whatsoever on his new knees. Here's what he had to say:

RING: How did you start boxing?

Ryan O'Neal: I just always did. It was common in the '50s; everybody had a pair of gloves. I even had a ring in my backyard that my dad built. We'd box all day long. We weren't skilled but we'd fire away. That was when we lived in North Hollywood (Calif.), when I was

Ryan O'Neal played a boxer in the 1979 film *Main Event*, co-starring Barbra Streisand. Image: **Getty Images**

something like 7 to 11. I was on this TV show called *Kid Gloves* [in 1951]. Kids would actually fight each other, believe it or not. I'm not even sure it made it to TV.

RING: I understand you lived in Germany for part of your childhood?

RO: Yes. My father was a writer [Charles "Blackie" O'Neal]. He found work there. I was 12 the first time we lived there, 17 when we went back.

RING: Did you box in Germany?

RO: I did. There was this boxing school in downtown Munich. American soldiers used to box there, tough ones. I fought one soldier and he beat me kind of easily. I was about 17. My brother Kevin fought Golden Gloves. He was tough. We'd beat up a lot of Germans. We said we were Jews. And I didn't know it at the time but I *was* part Jewish. They were ass-----. Even at 12 I knew what they'd done [in World War II]. And there were reminders in the '50s. They were still rebuilding from the bombings. There was still a lot of rubble.

RING: What other fighting experiences did you have?

RO: I boxed Joe Frazier. (Laughs.) I was co-hosting the *Mike Douglas Show* for a week in Philly. I had in my bio that I liked boxing. They asked me, "Will you box somebody on the show?" I was friends with Floyd Patterson. I thought he'd take it easy on me but he was in training to fight Henry Cooper and couldn't do it. They asked me if I'd box with (Muhammad) Ali. I said yes. I was a big fan. But they said he could be on only if he didn't discuss his Muslim faith and he said no. Then they said they had a local guy named Smokin' Joe. I knew who he was. I saw him get beat by Buster Mathis as an amateur. They said Joe lives around the corner. The next thing I knew I was wearing shorts that were too tight and Joe Frazier was across from me. Yank Durham [Frazier's trainer] said, "Just don't thumb him." I went out there swinging. He fired back, easily of course. He nailed me a few times. I thought his fist went through my stomach once. He nailed me so hard the crowd booed. It was something like two three-minute rounds. I had a headache for three weeks. I went to a chiropractor. He said, "Oh, you've been in an auto accident." I didn't want to tell him. He said, "Your head is supposed to be in the center but it's on your left shoulder." That was Joe.

RING: You had no real amateur fights?

RO: No. I just boxed in the gym while I was an actor, from about 18 on. The Hoover Street Gym. Eddie Futch trained Ken Norton and Hedgeman Lewis there. Boxing isn't good for an actor, though. It shows on your face.

RING: Tell me about Hedgeman Lewis.

RO: Jay Sebring, the hairstylist, used to do my hair. I used to say, "Make me like [Steve] McQueen." He had barbers working for him. One of his hair cutters had a fighter and he wanted to put together a corporation to run his career. That's what they did with Joe Frazier. I saw Hedgeman fight the previous night. He was terrific. He wanted to come out here from Detroit and train with Eddie Futch. It was going to cost $1,500 to invest in him. I went to my business manager and said I wanted to spend $1,500 on a boxer. He said, "For a dog?" The other investors peeled off but I stayed with him his whole career, from the mid-'60s into the '70s. He had a great career. He almost beat Jose Napoles the first time and got stopped the second time at 8,000 feet in Mexico City. He was just exhausted.

RING: Was it fun?

RO: Absolutely. ■

BOXING FOR FITNESS

LAYMEN CAN BENEFIT FROM THE TRAINING TECHNIQUES OF THE SPORT IF DONE PROPERLY

By: **Michael Rosenthal**

Those who take boxing classes mimic the training techniques of fighters like **Victor Ortiz.**

Image: **John Booz / Fightwireimages**

Some would have you believe boxing is struggling. One side of the sport most definitely isn't.

Boxing for fitness appears to be thriving among those who have no intention of exchanging punches but want to emulate the conditioning of some of the world's fittest athletes.

Gyms that specialize in boxing workouts and boxing-for-fitness classes seem to be popping up everywhere. And boxing DVDs reportedly are big sellers. Everyone – apparently including a long list of celebrities – is doing it.

And that doesn't surprise former light heavyweight contender Michael Olajide, a pioneer in boxing for fitness.

Olajide, a one-time foe of Thomas Hearns, about 20 years ago created AERO workouts, which uses the training techniques he mastered during his decade-long boxing career. He has a gym in New York City called AEROSPACE and his DVDs are popular around the world.

Why? He believes that the techniques boxers use to get and stay fit also work for the layman if it's taught properly, which isn't always the case.

"It works," Olajide told THE RING. "And it's convenient. You can do it anywhere. You can hang a bag in your garage, shadow box, jump rope, do a plyometric program at home. And it's easily understandable. It's people's nature to love but also to fight, to ball up your fist and punch.

"Shadow boxing, hitting bags and hitting focus mitts agrees with our nature. It's simple and easy to do. It's the perfect complement to you physically and mentally."

Olajide generally doesn't prepare his clients for full-contact combat, although some take up the

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Former middleweight and super middleweight contender **Michael Olajide** (right) was a pioneer in boxing for fitness.

sport in earnest.

However, those who take classes in which the sport is taught properly train much as boxers do. Thus, if they're committed to their training, they derive similar benefits to amateur and professional fighters.

And the variety of exercises, Olajide said, also prevents monotony.

"If an individual takes my classes ... the only thing missing would be the experience of getting hit," Olajide said. "They would know how to double up the hook, go to the body and head, throw a perfect uppercut and double up on the jab. It's really that serious and focused."

The key is that it must be taught properly.

Jay Chavez has been a fitness instructor in Los Angeles for 12 years and just happens to be a boxing fan. He sees the benefits of boxing for fitness; he also sees instructors who don't know what they're doing.

The result can be workouts that barely resemble boxing and possibly injuries, including sprained wrists because of improper wrapping or technique.

"People who don't know anything about boxing are talking out of their keister and selling it to people," Chavez said. "(Clients) don't get what they want. They want to be lean and hard, to be fit. They don't get that from pseudo boxing. They just get tired and sweaty.

"... Someone takes a one-day seminar and thinks, 'I'm a boxing trainer now.' It' doesn't work that way."

Olajide agrees.

"That disturbs me as well," he said. "The licensing organizations, the AFAA (Aerobics and Fitness Association of America) and ACE (The American Council on Exercise) want you to ... do their boxing and fitness training programs, which I understand. Generally, it you want to learn boxing, it's best to work with someone who has done it or trained.

"... It's hard for someone to know who to go to. Boxing trainers, like anybody, hustle you. Ask about their accomplishments. Ask who they've worked with. And don't marry yourself to any individual. Find someone who works for you." ■

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

MAYWEATHER LOSES TO THE LAW

By: **Brian Harty**

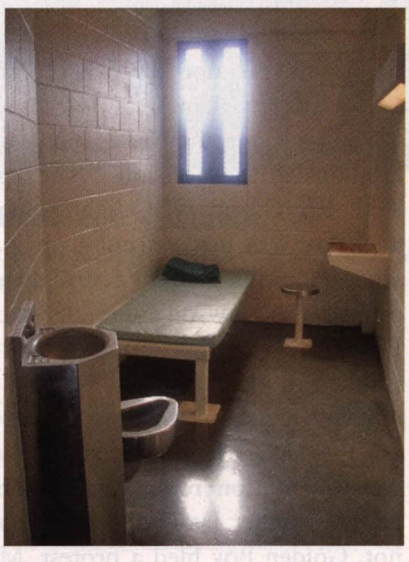
In more than one way, Floyd Mayweather Jr. lives on a different planet from most of us. But in the narrow boundary where our world intersects his, there is boxing and there is the law.

While the former he can shape to his will with intuitive ease, it is the latter that ultimately brought about his own submission in the form of a 90-day jail term that was originally scheduled to begin on Jan. 6, 2012. The sentence was delivered by a Las Vegas judge on Dec. 21 as the result of a domestic violence case from 2010, in which the welterweight superstar was accused of hitting and threatening his ex-girlfriend in full view of their two sons, aged 9 and 10 at the time. Mayweather avoided felony prosecution – with up to 34 years of prison time – by pleading guilty to lesser charges.

At the last hour, as Mayweather waited to see whether he'd be spending his 35th birthday in a 6-by-10 cell, the judge agreed to postpone the sentence until June 1 so Mayweather could keep the May 5 date he had reserved at the MGM Grand for his return to the ring. The "economic benefit" to Las Vegas from such an event was emphasized in the argument made by Mayweather's lawyer.

The original news had every fighter within reach of welterweight salivating for a possible jackpot, since Floyd's anticipated opponent, Manny Pacquiao, would presumably need to fight *someone* to fight in the first half of 2012. But does Mayweather's reprieve mean the most-anticipated fight of the young century is on? Many obstacles still exist. Plus, some say the time for that fight may have passed already. It might be now or never.

Whoever the opponent ends up being, Mayweather will begin serving his time the following month. What that will mean for his personal development is anyone's guess, but it's probably a bit unrealistic to imagine Floyd in his cell, away from the influence of his millions, alone and contemplative, gazing into his empty palms and suddenly realizing: Time *is* money. ■



Floyd Mayweather Jr. was expected to begin his 90-day sentence alone in a 6-foot by 10-foot cell like the one in this photograph, provided by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Mayweather was eligible to be moved into the general jail population if there are no problems, a police spokeswoman said.

The California State Athletic Commission ruled that **Chad Dawson** used an illegal move to get **Bernard Hopkins** off his shoulders. As a result, Dawson's TKO victory became a no-decision. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

By **Brian Harty**

After a saga that prominently featured the phrase "this is not the UFC," the **California State Athletic Commission** voted 5-1 to call the Oct. 15 incident between **Chad Dawson** and **Bernard Hopkins** a "no-decision." The fight, in which both THE RING and WBC light heavyweight titles were at stake, was just warming up in the second round when Hopkins whiffed a straight right and ended up draped over Dawson's shoulder like a sack of potatoes. Dawson, clearly not a potato fan, did *something* that resulted in Hopkins landing hard on the canvas and injuring his shoulder, thus ending the fight. Dawson got the TKO. The days that followed were welcomed by slow-motion replay enthusiasts, as debate raged about whether Dawson's move constituted a foul or not. Golden Boy filed a protest, MRI results and rule books were cited, and the WBC voted to label the fight a "technical draw." It all culminated, as so many sticky tales do, in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles on Dec. 13 when the CSAC met to address the matter, and the most important testimony may have come from referee **Pat Russell**, who acknowledged that he should have ruled the fight a no-decision from the start. So that's that. The records were ammended and now it's as if nothing ever happened – except that the WBC has ordered a rematch. ... Say hello to my little friend? Feds in Puerto Rico dropped by a house owned by former RING jr. flyweight champion **Ivan Calderon** and discovered roughly 500 pounds (4.7 Calderons) of cocaine, with a street value of over $4 million. Calderon played the "land baron" card, saying he just owns the place and had no idea it harbored enough blow to construct an igloo. ... And, in a story that borders on parable, **Wladimir Klitschko**, who straddles his heavyweight division like the Colossus of Rhodes, who, at 6-foot-6 and 245 pounds (2.3 Calderons) is the sort of visual aid you hope to have around when teaching your kids words like "pectoralis major" and "Conan," met his match in a foe the size of a Tic Tac. He was brought down by ... a kidney stone. Not to make light of such a thing – an online BabyCenter poll found that among mothers who had experienced both kidney stones and giving birth, 18.4% said labor was more painful, while 57.8% said the stones were worse. Klitschko described his encounter with the calcium crucible as "four days in hell." His condition was severe enough to postpone a Dec. 10 return to the ring, but Wladimir promised he'd be ready by March 3 to face former cruiserweight **Jean-Marc Mormeck** (who weighed about two Calderons in his last fight). ■

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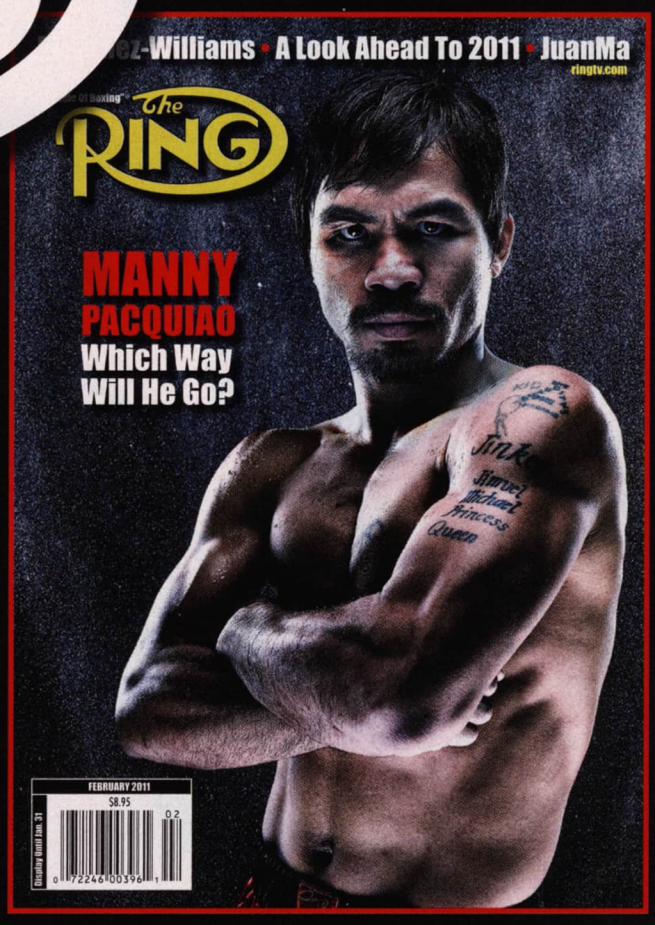

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BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

IRYNA STOROZHUK

Height: 5-7 **Weight:** 110 pounds
Measurements: 34-24-34
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 24 inches
Favorite Boxer: Wladimir Klitschko
Hometown: Izmail, Ukraine
Current Location: Miami Beach, Fla.
Where you've seen her: *Maxim* Hometown Hotties, Fashion TV, *Miami Life Magazine*.
Booking Info:
www.irynastorozhuk.blogspot.com

CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

IRYNA STOROZHUK

THE RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH BY: **HEATHER SHANHOLTZ** | IMAGES: **SIMON SOONG**

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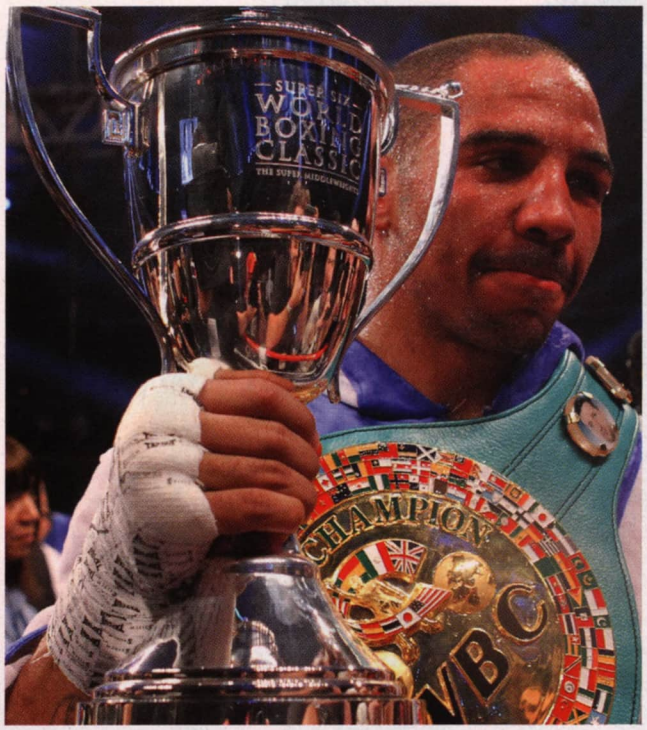


FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

ANDRE WARD

Image: **Ed Mulholland / Fightwireimages**

Andre Ward had the pedigree going into the Super Six World Boxing Classic. He capped a tremendous amateur career by winning a gold medal in the 2004 Olympics -- the first American to do so since David Reid in 1996 -- and was unbeaten in his young professional career.

However, going into Showtime's six-man competition, he was deemed by many experts to be too inexperienced to prevail against the likes of battle-tested veterans Mikkel Kessler and Arthur Abraham. Ward proved a lot of people wrong.

The Northern Californian capped a perfect run through the tournament by defeating tough Carl Froch by a unanimous decision on Dec. 17 in Atlantic City, N.J., outclassing his befuddled British rival with superior hand speed and unusual all-around ability.

The victory garnered him both the Super Six and THE RING super middleweight championships to go with two major titles, leaving no doubt that a true star was born in the tournament. ■

RATINGS ANALYSIS FOR PERIOD ENDING DEC. 26, 2011

POUND FOR POUND: Giovani Segura (No. 9 last month) fell from the Top 10 after his eighth-round knockout loss to Brian Viloria, which left room for Andre Ward (No. 10 last month) to move up and Vitali Klitschko to enter at No. 10. Ward then leaped from No. 9 all the way to No. 5 after his dominating victory over Carl Froch in the Super Six final, knocking Juan Manuel Marquez (No. 5 last month), Wladimir Klitschko (No. 6 last month), Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (No. 7 last month) and Tim Bradley (No. 8 last month) down one notch each.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Robert Helenius (No. 5 last month) received a disputed split decision over Derek Chisora in Helenius' home country of Finland. As a result, he switched places with Alexander Dimitrenko (No. 6 last month).

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Troy Ross (No. 6 last month) dropped out because of inactivity, pulling everyone below up a notch. He was replaced by unbeaten Lateef Kayode, who entered at No. 10.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Ward (No. 1 last month) claimed the vacant 168-pound championship with his victory over Froch. That moved everyone up a spot and made room for James DeGale at No. 10.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Felix Sturm (No. 1 last month) was awarded a dubious draw against unrated Martin Murray, which followed a disputed split-decision victory over Matthew Macklin. Thus, Sturm switched places with Daniel Geale (No. 2 last month), who has only a split-decision loss to Anthony Mundine 2½ years ago on his record. Meanwhile, Paul Williams (No. 8 last month) dropped out of the Top 10 because he hasn't fought at middleweight for more than a year. That left room for unbeaten Martin Murray to enter at No. 10. Later, unbeaten Gennady Golovkin entered at No. 10 – pushing Murray up a notch – after he stopped Lajuan Simon in one round. Marco Antonio Rubio (No. 9 last month) dropped out.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Delvin Rodriguez (unrated last month) easily outpointed Pawel Wolak (No. 10 last month) in their rematch. Thus, Wolak dropped out and Rodriguez entered at No. 10.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Selcuk Aydin (No. 10 last month) swapped places with Shane Mosley (No. 9 last month) after the Turk defeated Ionut Dan Ion by a unanimous decision. Mike Jones (No. 8 last month) easily outpointed unrated but tough Sebastian Lujan, allowing him to change places with Jan Zaveck (No. 7 last month). Zaveck was coming off a loss to Andre Berto.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Lamont Peterson's upset split-decision victory over Amir Khan (No. 1 last month) shook up the top of the division. Timothy Bradley (No. 2 last month) moved up to No. 1, Peterson leaped from No. 6 to No. 2 and Khan dropped to No. 3.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: John Murray (No. 8 last month) remained in the Top 10 – at No. 10 -- after his brutal 11th-round knockout loss to No. 1 Brandon Rios because Rios came in overweight. Rios plans to remain at 135 for a few more fights, his trainer Robert Garcia said.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Cristobal Cruz (No. 6 last month) dropped out because he has moved up to junior lightweight. Satoshi Hosono replaced him, entering at No. 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Jorge Arce (No. 8 last month) dropped out because he went down to bantamweight. Arce was replaced by Victor Terrazas, who is coming off a unanimous-decision upset win over Fernando Montiel. Terrazas is No. 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Nonito Donaire (No. 1 last month) dropped out because he moved up to junior featherweight. Arce replaced Donaire, coming in at No. 10.

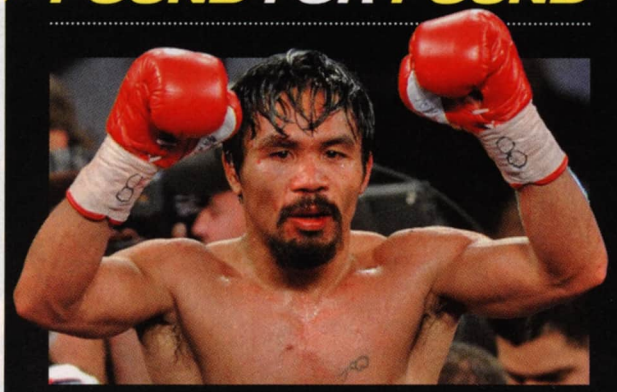
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Tepparith Kokietgym (No. 7 last month) jumped to No. 5 after his unanimous decision over Daiki Kameda (No. 9 last month) in Japan. Kameda dropped out of the ratings, making room for Rodrigo Guerrero to enter at No. 10.

FLYWEIGHTS: Brian Viloria (No. 3 last month) changed places with Moruti Mthalane (No. 2 last month) after his impressive victory over Giovani Segura.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Adrian Hernandez (No. 1 last month) dropped to No. 8 after he lost to unrated Kompayak Porpamook, who entered at No. 7. Gilberto Keb Baas (No. 2 last month) ascended to No. 1.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.

POUND FOR POUND



1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines | 54-3-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   US | 42-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   Argentina | 48-2-2 (27 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines | 27-1-0 (18 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
5. **ANDRE WARD**
   US | 24-0-0 (13 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 53-6-1 (39 KOs) | LIGHTWEIGHT
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   Ukraine | 56-3-0 (49 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
8. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand | 83-3-2 (45 KOs) | FLYWEIGHT
9. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   US | 28-0-0 (12 KOs) | JR. WELTERWEIGHT
10. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
    Ukraine | 43-2-0 (40 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

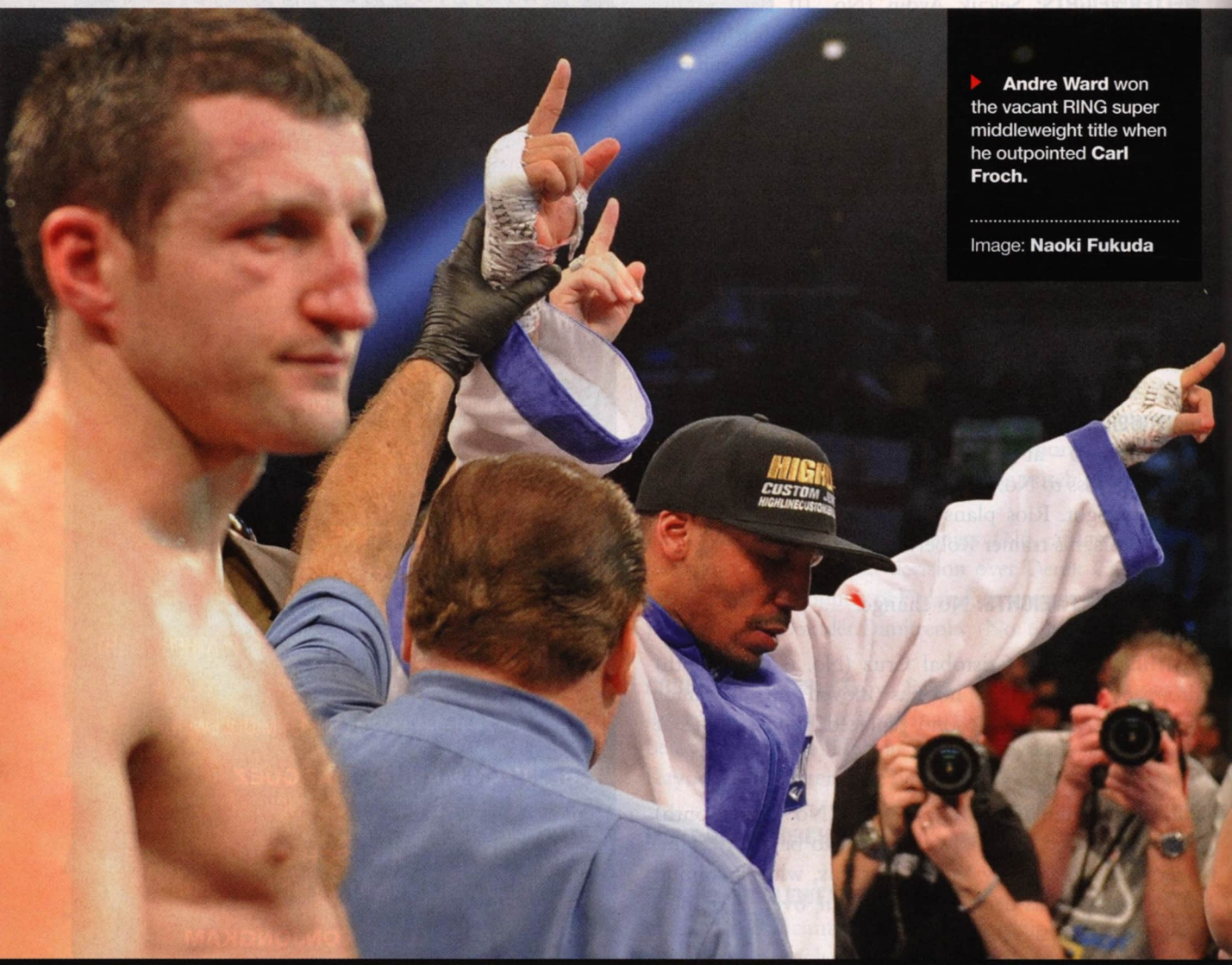
Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the Top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's No. 1 and No. 2 contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our No. 1 and No. 3 contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com



Andre Ward won the vacant RING super middleweight title when he outpointed **Carl Froch.**

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 56-3-0 (49 KOs)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 43-2-0 (40 KOs)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia | 23-0-0 (16 KOs)
3. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland | 44-2-0 (28 KOs)
4. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
US | 36-2-0 (18 KOs)
5. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Finland | 16-0-0 (11 KOs)
6. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine | 32-1-0 (21 KOs)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia | 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
8. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan | 27-2-1 (17 KOs)
9. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
US 34-2-0 | (29 KOs)
10. **KUBRAT PULEV**
Bulgaria | 14-0-0 (6 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany | 34-1-0 (25 KOs)
2. **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
Cuba | 25-1-0 (13 KOs)
3. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
US | 24-3-0 (12 KOs)
4. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland | 46-2-1 (33 KOs)
5. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia | 23-1-0 (17 KOs)
6. **ANTONIO TARVER**
US | 29-6-0 (20 KOs)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy | 29-3-1 (12 KOs)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
UK | 18-2-3 (8 KOs)
9. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama | 38-3-2 (29 KOs)
10. **LATEEF KAYODE**
Nigeria | 18-0-0 (14 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C **BERNARD HOPKINS**
US | 52-6-2 (32 KOs)

1. **JEAN PASCAL**
Canada | 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
US | 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
3. **CHAD DAWSON**
US | 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
4. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
UK | 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
5. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania | 27-3-0 (15 KOs)
6. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary | 33-0-0 (18 KOs)
7. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan | 12-1-0 (8 KOs)
8. **KARO MURAT**
Germany | 24-1-1 (14 KOs)
9. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain | 21-3-1 (8 KOs)
10. **ISMAYL SILLAKH**
Ukraine | 17-0-0 (13 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C **ANDRE WARD**
US | 25-0-0 (13 KOs)

1. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania | 30-0-0 (24 KOs)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark | 44-2-0 (33 KOs)
3. **CARL FROCH**
UK | 28-2-0 (20 KOs)
4. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Russia | 40-2-0 (23 KOs)
5. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon | 29-5-2 (20 KOs)
6. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
South Africa | 17-0-1 (12 KOs)
7. **GEORGE GROVES**
UK | 14-0-0 (11 KOs)
8. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica | 51-15-2 (35 KOs)
9. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia | 32-3-0 (26 KOs)
10. **JAMES DEGALE**
UK | 11-1-0 (8 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 48-2-2 (27 KOs)

1. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia | 26-1-0 (15 KOs)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany | 36-2-2 (15 KOs)
3. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
UK | 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
4. **GRZEGORZ PROKSA**
Poland | 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
5. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
Mexico | 44-0-1 (31 KOs)
6. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany | 30-1-0 (10 KOs)
7. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia | 19-0-0 (15 KOs)
8. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France | 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
9. **MARTIN MURRAY**
UK | 23-0-1 (10 KOs)
10. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
Kazakhstan | 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico | 37-2-0 (30 KOs)
2. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 39-0-1 (29 KOs)
3. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
US | 31-0-0 (19 KOs)
4. **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba | 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
5. **CARLOS MOLINA**
Mexico | 19-4-2 (6 KOs)
6. **JAMES KIRKLAND**
US | 30-1-0 (27 KOs)
7. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico | 20-2-0 (17 KOs)
8. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
US | 31-4-0 (18 KOs)
9. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine | 37-1-0 (23 KOs)
10. **DELVIN RODRIGUEZ**
Dom. Republic | 26-5-3 (14 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 54-3-2 (38 KOs)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
US | 42-0-0 (26 KOs)
3. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
US | 29-3-2 (22 KOs)
4. **ANDRE BERTO**
US | 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
5. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
Ukraine | 32-0-0 (21 KOs)
6. **KELL BROOK**
UK | 26-0-0 (18 KOs)
7. **MIKE JONES**
US | 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
8. **JAN ZAVECK**
Slovenia | 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
9. **SELCUK AYDIN**
Turkey | 23-0-0 (17 KOs)
10. **SHANE MOSLEY**
US | 46-7-1 (39 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
US | 28-0-0 (12 KOs)
2. **LAMONT PETERSON**
US | 30-1-1 (15 KOs)
3. **AMIR KHAN**
UK | 26-2-0 (18 KOs)
4. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina | 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
5. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
US | 22-1-0 (13 KOs)
6. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
Argentina | 29-2-0 (27 KOs)
7. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico | 52-7-0 (36 KOs)
8. **ZAB JUDAH**
US | 41-7-0 (28 KOs)
9. **DANNY GARCIA**
US | 22-0-0 (14 KOs)
10. **MIKE ALVARADO**
US | 32-0-0 (23 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 53-6-1 (39 KOs)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
US | 29-0-1 (22 KOs)
2. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
US | 29-1-1 (18 KOs)
3. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
Mexico | 26-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico | 29-3-0 (13 KOs)
5. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
UK | 32-1-0 (24 KOs)
6. **PAULUS MOSES**
Namibia | 28-1-0 (19 KOs)
7. **RICKY BURNS**
UK | 33-2-0 (9 KOs)
8. **JOHN MURRAY**
UK | 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
9. **JOHN MOLINA**
US | 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
10. **RICHARD ABRIL**
Cuba | 17-2-1 (8 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan | 17-0-0 (14 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
Mexico | 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
3. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico | 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
4. **JORGE SOLIS**
Mexico | 40-3-2 (29 KOs)
5. **TAKAHIRO AO**
Japan | 22-2-1 (10 KOs)
6. **ADRIEN BRONER**
US | 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
7. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
US | 21-0-0 (7 KOs)
8. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
Dom. Republic | 19-2-0 (10 KOs)
9. **ELOY PEREZ**
US | 23-0-2 (7 KOs)
10. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
Mexico | 28-1-0 (19 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba | 21-0-0 (16 KOs)
2. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia | 46-0-2 (22 KOs)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico | 37-11-2 (25 KOs)
4. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico | 31-1-0 (28 KOs)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico | 41-4-0 (34 KOs)
6. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 40-7-0 (36 KOs)
7. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico | 51-7-0 (45 KOs)
8. **MIKEY GARCIA**
US | 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
9. **BILL DIB**
Australia | 33-1-0 (20 KOs)
10. **SATOSHI HOSONO**
Japan | 21-1-0 (15 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan | 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
2. **RICO RAMOS**
US | 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
3. **AKIFUMA SHIMODA**
Japan | 24-3-1 (10 KOs)
4. **P. KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand | 45-2-0 (31 KOs)
5. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
S. Africa | 33-6-0 (18 KOs)
6. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 8-0-0 (6 KOs)
7. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada | 34-2-0 (12 KOs)
8. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
Puerto Rico | 21-1-1 (18 KOs)
9. **MASAAKI SERIE**
Japan | 20-4-0 (9 KOs)
10. **VICTOR TERRAZAS**
Mexico | 32-2-1 (18 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama | 32-1-1 (11 KOs)
2. **ABNER MARES**
   US | 23-0-1 (13 KOs)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana | 28-4-0 (22 KOs)
4. **ERIC MOREL**
   US | 46-2-0 (23 KOs)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia | 37-4-1 (27 KOs)
6. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia | 20-2-1 (14 KOs)
7. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan | 27-1-0 (17 KOs)
8. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines | 29-2-3 (18 KOs)
9. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
   Japan | 15-0-2 (11 KOs)
10. **JORGE ARCE**
    Mexico | 59-6-2 (45 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina | 35-1-2 (19 KOs)
2. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
   Thailand | 20-4-1 (7 KOs)
3. **TOMONOBU SHIMIZU**
   Japan | 19-3-1 (9 KOs)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico | 36-7-2 (26 KOs)
5. **TEPPARITH KOKIETGYM**
   Thailand | 19-2-0 (12 KOs)
6. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico | 36-13-1 (24 KOs)
7. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan | 23-2-1 (12 KOs)
8. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico | 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
9. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan | 15-4-1 (9 KOs)
10. **RODRIGO GUERRERO**
    Mexico | 16-3-1 (10 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C **P. WONJONGKAM**
Thailand | 83-3-2 (45 KOs)

1. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 32-2-0 (25 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   US | 30-3-0 (17 KOs)
3. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   S. Africa | 28-2-0 (19 KOs)
4. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines | 25-0-0 (9 KOs)
5. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines | 29-6-2 (17 KOs)
6. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico | 37-6-1 (29 KOs)
7. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama | 23-3-0 (18 KOs)
8. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina | 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
9. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
   Japan | 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
10. **EDGAR SOSA**
    Mexico | 43-7-0 (26 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C **VACANT**

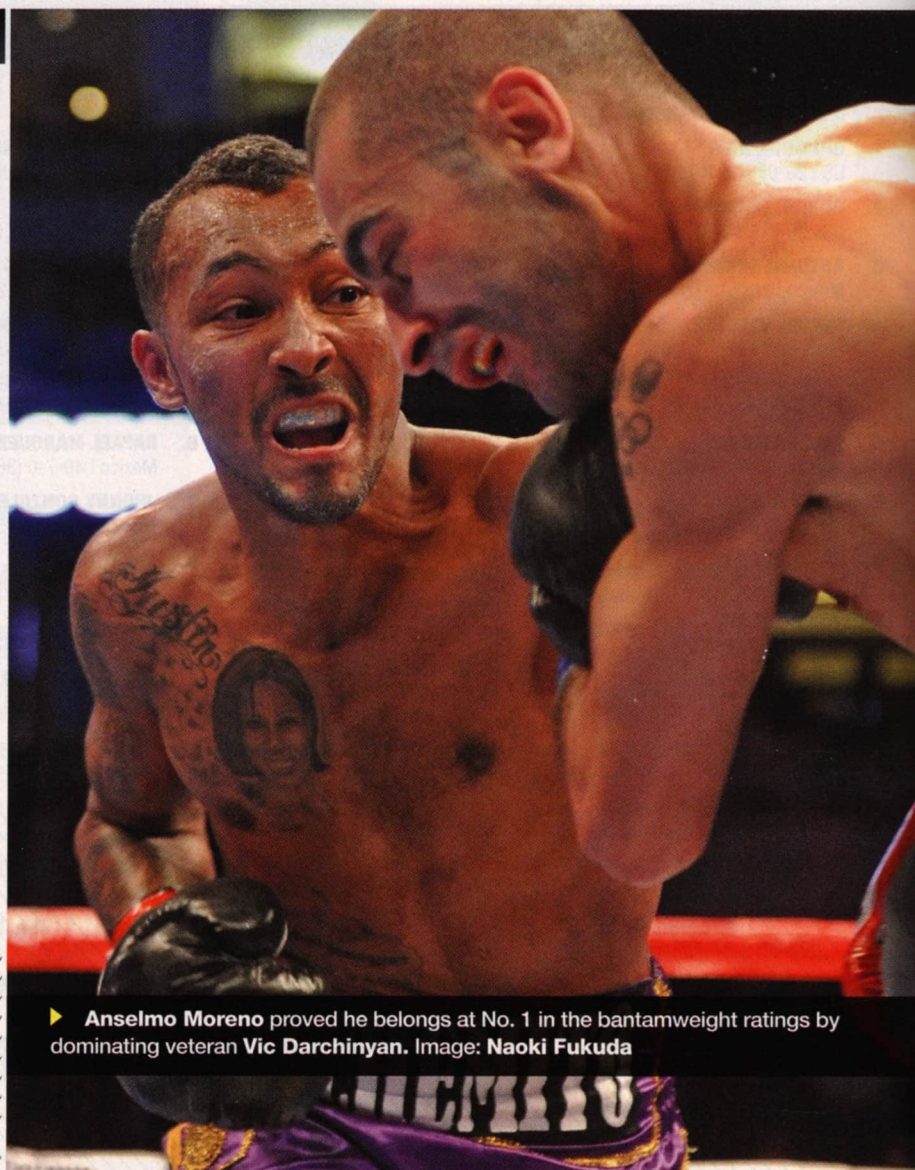
1. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico | 35-21-4 (22 KOs)
2. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico | 34-2-3 (21 KOs)
3. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua | 30-0-0 (25 KOs)
4. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina | 49-10-2 (18 KOs)
5. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines | 29-1-3 (16 KOs)
6. **MASAYUKI KURODA**
   Japan | 21-3-0 (13 KOs)
7. **KOMPAYAK PORPRAMOOK**
   Thailand | 44-3-0 (30 KOs)
8. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico | 22-2-1 (14 KOs)
9. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
   Japan | 15-0-3 (9 KOs)
10. **RAMON HIRALES**
    Mexico | 16-3-1 (9 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   S. Africa | 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan | 8-0-0 (5 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
   Mexico | 14-1-0 (6 KOs)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico | 31-2-1 (18 KOs)
5. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua | 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
6. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand | 20-0-0 (5 KOs)
7. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines | 29-4-6 (19 KOs)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan | 24-4-0 (10 KOs)
9. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines | 25-6-1 (21 KOs)
10. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
    Japan | 15-2-0 (8 KOs)

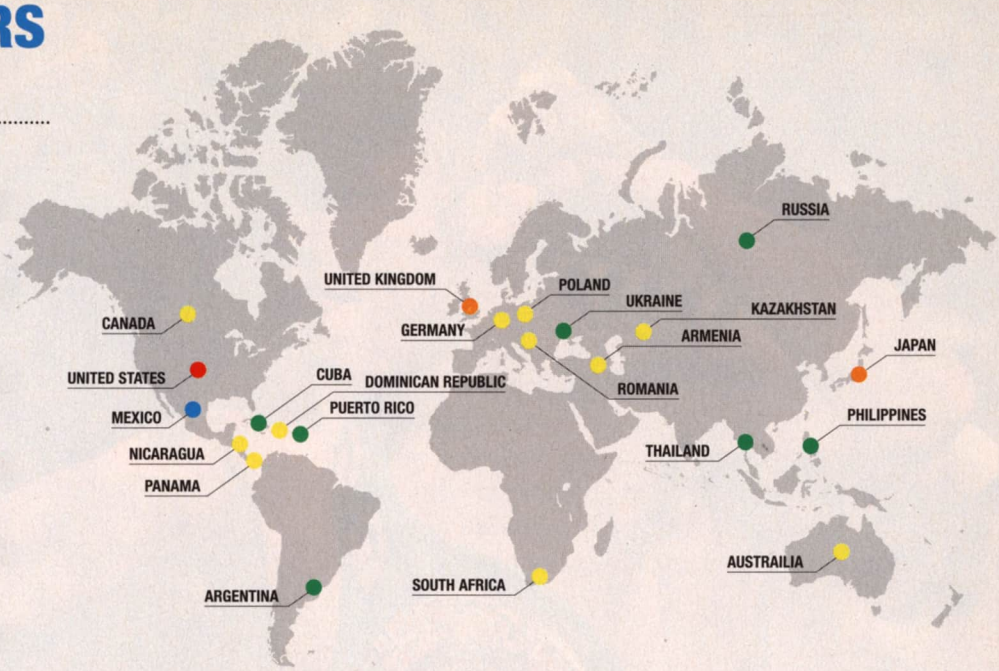
SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR UPDATED RATINGS AT **RINGTV.COM.**



Anselmo Moreno proved he belongs at No. 1 in the bantamweight ratings by dominating veteran **Vic Darchinyan.** Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	33
MEXICO	29
JAPAN	17
UNITED KINGDOM	12
PHILIPPINES	7
ARGENTINA	6
THAILAND	6
UKRAINE	6
CUBA	5
PUERTO RICO	5
RUSSIA	5
GERMANY	4
SOUTH AFRICA	4
PANAMA	3
POLAND	3
AUSTRALIA	2
CANADA	2
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2
KAZAKHSTAN	2
NICARAGUA	2
ROMANIA	2
ARMENIA	2
BULGARIA	1
CAMAROON	1
COLOMBIA	1
DENMARK	1
FINLAND	1
FRANCE	1
GHANA	1
HUNGARY	1
INDONESIA	1
ITALY	1
JAMAICA	1
NAMIBIA	1
NIGERIA	1
SLOVENIA	1
SPAIN	1
TURKEY	1
UZBEKISTAN	1



30 OR MORE | 20 OR MORE | 10 OR MORE | 5 OR MORE | 2 OR MORE

U.S. VS. MEXICO

DIVISION	U.S.	MEXICO
HEAVYWEIGHTS	2	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	2	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	0
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	1
JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	3
WELTERWEIGHTS	5	0
JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	6	1
LIGHTWEIGHTS	3	3
JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	3	3
FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	4
JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	1
BANTAMWEIGHTS	2	1
JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	3
FLYWEIGHTS	1	3
JR. FLYWEIGHTS	0	4
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	2
TOTAL	**33**	**29**

POUND FOR POUND

THE NUMBER OF FIGHTERS IN RELATION TO POPULATION (INCLUDING COUNTRIES WITH AT LEAST TWO RATED FIGHTERS).

1.	PUERTO RICO	1 PER 797,827
2.	PANAMA	1 PER 1,153,487
3.	ARMENIA	1 PER 1,483,988
4.	CUBA	1 PER 2,217,466
5.	NICARAGUA	1 PER 2,833,151
6.	MEXICO	1 PER 3,925,525
7.	DOM. REPUBLIC	1 PER 4,978,324
8.	UNITED KINGDOM	1 PER 5,224,864
9.	ARGENTINA	1 PER 6,961,621
10.	JAPAN	1 PER 7,439,745
11.	KAZAKHSTAN	1 PER 7,761,187
12.	U.S.	1 PER 9,491,880
13.	UKRAINE	1 PER 10,449,727
14.	AUSTRALIA	1 PER 10,883,356
15.	ROMANIA	1 PER 10,952,276
16.	THAILAND	1 PER 11,120,025
17.	SOUTH AFRICA	1 PER 12,251,008
18.	POLAND	1 PER 12,813,862
19.	PHILIPPINES	1 PER 14,547,705
20.	CANADA	1 PER 17,015,295
21.	GERMANY	1 PER 20,367,959
22.	RUSSIA	1 PER 27,747,978

SOURCE FOR POPULATION FIGURES: CIA'S THE WORLD FACT BOOK

***NOTE:** The country of fighters who have spent large portions of their lives in two countries was determined primarily by where they spent the bulk of their childhood.*

IMAGE: NAOKI FUKUDA

WILL IT HAPPEN?

THE RING ASKS THE EXPERTS WHAT THEY THINK

Gareth Davies
London Daily Telegraph
"I don't think it will happen right away, but I think that it will happen eventually. People say that both guys are a little bit over-hyped, but I think that Chavez is more over-hyped than Alvarez. I'm really impressed with Alvarez at his age, for what he's done so far. And I really do think that he's a contender for the No. 1 pound-for-pound shot in the future. I know that he's not ready for Mayweather, but down the line, that's a big, big money fight."

Tim Smith
New York Daily News
"Alvarez-Chavez should happen. They're both young guys, and we have fewer questions about Alvarez than we do about Chavez, or, at least I do. Will it happen? I guess that a Iot is going to depend on whether or not Bob Arum wants to put one of his golden children in against somebody from Golden Boy. That's ultimately what it comes down to. It should happen, yeah, because you're matching two, young, Mexican warriors against each other. That seems to be the right thing to do. If you wait too long, one of them is going to be damaged goods."

Bob Velin
USA Today
"It should and it will. I don't know when, but, yeah, that would be the biggest fight in Mexico in years. It definitely has to happen. I think that it will, and how could it not?"

Jeff Powell
Daily Mail (England)
"I think that it may be a little early for both of them to have that fight. I can't see any purpose in them fighting just yet. They've got a bit to learn, both of them, and they can probably have a unification fight in about a year, which is my take on it. I don't see the economic imperative for them to fight right now, because one of them gets knocked off. I doubt that it will happen yet. These days, a loss has almost become a catastrophe, which I think is crazy. If you can lose a football game, you should be able to lose a boxing match and not be so damaged by the

RING FEATURE **OUT OF THE NORM**

SAUL "CANELO" ALVAREZ AND JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR. HAVE BEEN ON A COLLISION COURSE SINCE THEY BECAME BONA FIDE STARS BUT THEIR WEIGHTS COULD STAND IN THE WAY OF A SHOWDOWN. AS A RESULT, IS IT ...

NOW OR NEVER ?

By: **Norm Frauenheim**

In a boxing twist to George Bernard Shaw's old line about what divides Americans and Brits, the U.S. and Mexico share a border and are separated by a common interest. North of the border, the refrain has been Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. – when, oh, when will it happen? South of it, same question, but different names: Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and Saul Alvarez. When, oh, when will they fight for Mexican supremacy?

There has not been an easy answer for either, but interest has kept the discussion moving on street corners, talk shows and websites, in English, Spanish and Spanglish. By now, we've heard it all and more about why Mayweather-Pacquiao can happen or can't, will or won't. If not in May, then maybe after there's a cure for cancer.

Talk about Chavez-Alvarez has proceeded almost on a parallel track. But what seemed destined now is not so certain. Unlike the divisiveness that prevented a Mayweather-Pacquiao agreement for so long, it's easier to explain why uncertainty has crept into chances that Mexico will ever see Jr. defend his dad's defining legacy against a red-headed kid called Canelo.

Just look at the scale. It is beginning to separate Alvarez and Chavez Jr. as surely as insults separated Mayweather and Pacquiao.

"I think Chavez wants to fight; I know Canelo wants to, but the issue really does seem to be the weight," said Richard Schaefer, chief executive office for Golden Boy Promotions, Alvarez's promoter.

But it's not what the scale shows at the formal weigh-in, a marketing ritual on the day before the opening bell. Officially, Alvarez and Chavez are close in weight. Alvarez is a junior middleweight, 154 pounds. Chavez is a middleweight, 160. A catch-weight looks doable. Two have been suggested.

Saul Alvarez had no trouble against Kermit Cintron in his most-recent fight. Image: **Getty Images**

156, Golden Boy President Oscar De La Hoya says.

"We'll do it at 158," Chavez trainer Freddie Roach said before Amir Khan fought Lamont Peterson on Dec. 10 in Washington, D.C. "I'd prefer 160. We'd struggle to get to 158, but we could do it."

OK, let's meet in the middle. How about 159?

But the issue is what might happen during the 24 hours after stepping off the scale. Lots of water and plates of pasta can transform Chavez into a different fighter, or at least a much bigger one. Alvarez's corner looks at Chavez and sees a light heavyweight about to happen. In a victory over Sebastian Zbik in June, Chavez was reported to be 180. In his impressive fifth-round stoppage of Peter Manfredo on Nov. 19 in Houston, he looked to be at least 170.

"156, 157 or whatever it is," Schaefer said. "That's not really the issue, because I don't think this fight gets killed by a single pound. But I think the issue is how much Chavez gained after the weigh-in. On fight night, he is 180 or something like that. You are really talking about a 20-, 25-pound difference between the two guys.

"I know it is a dream matchup. But there would have to be a pretty stringent weight limitation, not only for making the fight but for how much the fighter can gain."

It's not clear whether that would mean another weigh-in the day of the fight.

"Maybe that, or maybe put into the contract very significant penalties that you can't gain more than, say, 10 pounds, whatever the number," Schaefer said.

It's an issue that looms as problematic if in fact there are negotiations. The working relationship between Golden Boy and Top Rank's Bob Arum, Chavez's promoter, is uneasy at best. Democrats and Republicans have a better chance at an agreement.

Still, the public's intense interest throughout Mexico is unmistakable. It creates its own momentum.

"It's hard to put into words," Schaefer said.

In Mexico, it's hard not to hear about it. It's a rare day when Mexican journalist Hesiquio Baldera of Oaxaca doesn't.

"This is the fight Mexico wants," said Baldera, who knew Alvarez when his red hair was a bigger attraction than his punches. "In the streets, family members and people in general who know I am a boxing writer always ask me: 'When is that fight going to happen?'

reputation. But unfortunately, that perspective is altered. Financially, it's such a business to put on a fight now, and I think that they'll try to keep them both running, economically, for a while."

Luke Thomas
SB Nation
"Should it happen? Absolutely. Everyone in the community that I've spoken to certainly agrees that Canelo is beyond prospect and contender and has become champion status, but really hasn't fought anybody that has sort of stuck it to him other than maybe Miguel Cotto's brother, where he got hurt early. Even in the Alfonso Gomez fight, it was stopped early in my judgement. I think that somebody like Chavez can take him deep and see what he's made of. Promotionally, it makes sense. It's a huge fight in Mexico, and it would be a big fight stateside, maybe in Los Angeles. Canelo needs it and I say why not? Will it happen? I will give it a 60 percent chance. It's not going to happen in early 2012, but maybe in the third or fourth quarter."

Don Chargin
Golden Boy Promotions matchmaker
"Right now, the other night, when [Chavez] got into the ring, he weighed 179 pounds. He's too big. He' s like a cruiserweight. He's too big right now."

David Greisman
BoxingScene.com
"Will it happen? It will only happen when there are no more options for Chavez. I think that Golden Boy is willing to put Alvarez in with Chavez because they believe that he has a shot at beating Chavez. Should it happen? Why not? It's going to make a whole lot of money with HBO, which has been promoting Alvarez and Chavez, for their fights. It's going to make a whole lot of money in Mexico, where both of them sell their tickets. Beyond that, it's going to be a good fight. Both guys come forward, both guys throw punches, so why not?"

Paulie Malignaggi
Welterweight
"I don't think that's going to happen anytime soon, if it ever happens. They're both young and they both have a lot in front of them. There's too much money to lose for either one of them when they can keep fighting other guys and can continue to make a lot of money. It's not going to happen

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. proved too strong for **Sebastian Zbik** in a majority-decision victory over the German on June 4. Image: **Getty Images**

"If they fight, it should be the most-watched event in boxing history in Mexico. It has gone beyond boxing. It is a social event, a political event, a TV event. There has never been an interest like this in Mexican boxing history. This fight here can basically fill up Azteca Stadium with more than 100,000 fans in attendance. In Mexico, this fight will break all the records."

Television ratings are the only way to measure interest. The rights to each fighter are owned by different networks, Televisa for Alvarez and Azteca for Chavez. Their audience has been growing with almost every bout.

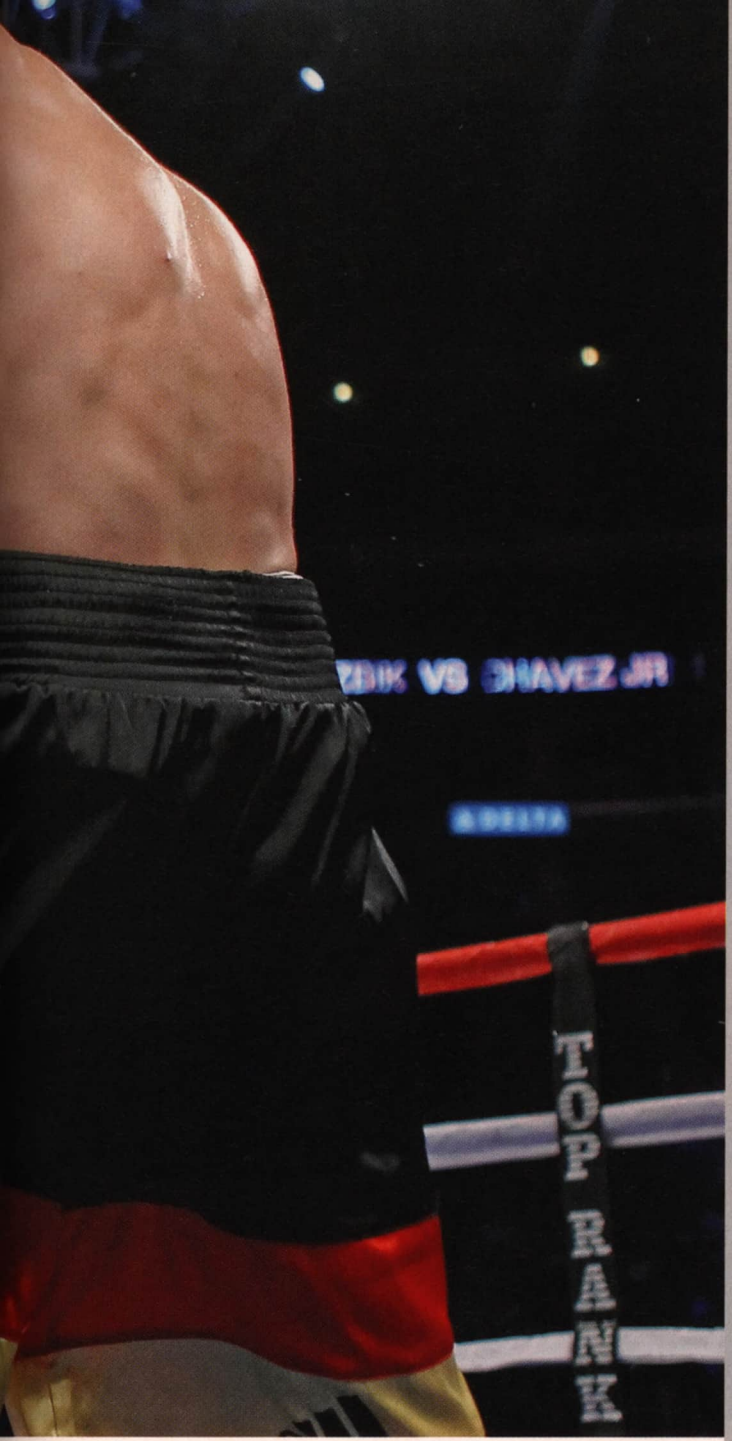
"Thirty, 35 million, for some of their fights," Schaefer said.

Mexico's population: almost 114 million. That means as much as a third of the country would be watching.

Meanwhile, Mexico City's Azteca Stadium, where Chavez's dad fought Greg Haugen in front of a reported 132,274 in 1993, already has been mentioned as a potential site. Televisa owns the stadium.

"Televisa has told me they would like to host the fight at legendary Azteca," Schaefer said.

The fighters themselves have helped generate further interest, especially after each of their last fights.



"I'm not afraid of anyone," Chavez said after stopping Manfredo. "Sergio Martinez, Canelo Alvarez. I'll fight anyone."

A week later, after Alvarez stopped Kermit Cintron at Plaza de Toros in Mexico City, he stood in the middle of the ring, heard the crowd chant "Chavez, Chavez" and said: "Bring me Julio Jr. I'm ready to fight Chavez to show he's only a name. ... I'm ready for Chavez, so he can see who's who. Wherever, whatever price."

Then, there has been social media. What's a projected tangle without preliminary tweets?

"There has been a huge Twitter war between

for a while, but I believe that, at the moment, Saul Alvarez is a more complete fighter, but Chavez is the bigger man. So I don't know who would win, but I don't see it happening anytime soon."

Bernard Hopkins
Light heavyweight
"I like Chavez, although he definitely has not put the time in, and he's not his father. But I think that that's a fight that will actually break out one of the two or three superstars in boxing. But no matter who I think should win, I think that the fight should happen because we need matches like that. We need the Floyd Mayweathers and the Manny Pacquiaos. We need the Amir Khans and the Lamont Petersons. We need this fight no matter whether I'm on the Golden Boy side or I'm on Top Rank's or anybody else's side. At the end of the day, when you have matches made by whoever, that brings life and light to boxing."

Alex Ariza
Chavez's strength and conditioning coach
"Of course it should happen. It's the biggest fight almost in Mexico's history. Here you have a country that is literally divided between two young guys -- two good, young guys – Saul Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., and obviously for the reasons known. Now, Julio, in his past couple of fights, has shown everybody that he's not there by accident, he's there for a reason. It's no accident that he's where he is. So I don't think that there is a bigger fight in Mexico, and I think those fights like that should happen because it will put a whole country behind at least one of those guys. That's something that boxing needs. It needs those big rivalries, and you've got two athletes like that. I don't think that anybody should stand in the way of something like that."

Freddie Roach
Chavez's trainer
"Should the fight happen? I say 100 percent, yes. Will it happen? I'm not sure. I would love to have that fight, though. That's the second-biggest fight in the world today."

Oscar De La Hoya
Alvarez's promoter
"I hope that it happens. Like I have said, the only promoter right now that doesn't want to work with anybody is Top Rank. Golden Boy Promotions is willing to work with any promoter. Kathy Duva,

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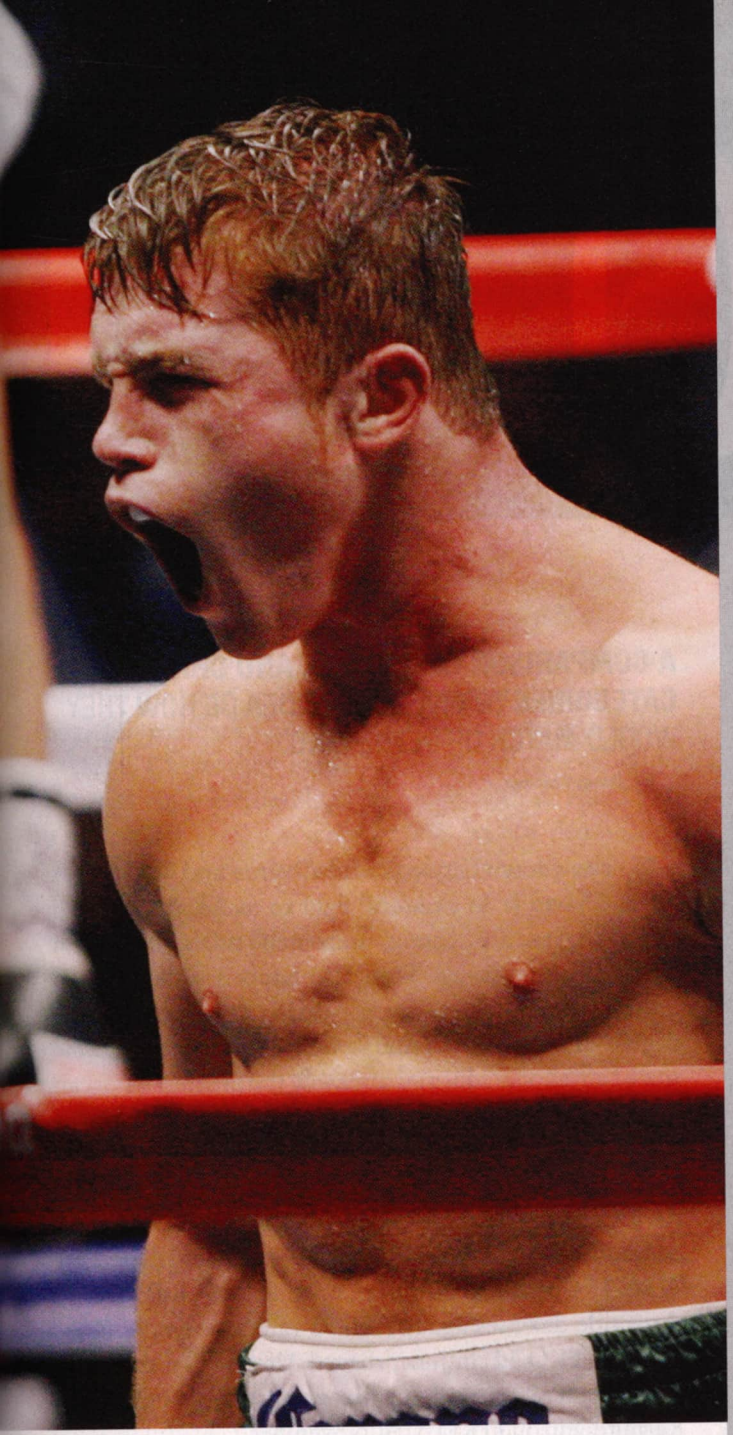
Saul Alvarez's intensity comes out both during and after the action. Images: **Getty Images**

Chavez and Canelo," Baldera said. "Julio has been critical of Saul and challenges him all the time, Alvarez has countered those verbal attacks with hard words."

The interest, from the public and fighters alike, is there. But the weight issue is inescapable. At 25, Chavez is quickly moving up the scale. Projections have the 21-year old Alvarez reaching his prime as a middleweight. Although problematic, the weight question creates urgency. If not 2012, perhaps never.

"The weight is a big factor for the fight to happen," Baldera says. "It has to happen ASAP because Chavez is ready to go up to super middleweight. Alvarez is going



to stay for a while at junior middleweight. So if the fight doesn't happen (in 2012), it won't happen at all."

Schaefer remains hopeful.

"If I had to roll the dice, I'd say yes, maybe in the second half of [2012]," said Schaefer, whose immediate plans for Alvarez include a bout in March and first spot as the headliner in a pay-per-view card.

There's a long line of possibilities for Alvarez in his next bout. James Kirkland, Miguel Cotto, Alfredo Angulo, Shane Mosley, Cornelius Brundage and even Mayweather have been mentioned.

But in Mexico, only one possibility matters. ■

Dan Goossen, Don King, which we did with Abner Mares and Joseph Agbeko. Anybody. Gary Shaw. But Top Rank is a whole different story. They do not want to work with us."

Alec Kohut
Maxboxing.com
"It will happen, but it will not be for a while. Understandably, they will make as much money as they can with these two guys. I hadn't been too high on either fighter, but Chavez Jr. looks pretty good and I see him developing. Alvarez, he's still very young and I'm not yet on that bandwagon. It will happen, but as they say, not until the money's right. When the money's right, they'll fight."

Dan Rafael
ESPN
"It should definitely happen. I don't think that it will, at least no time soon. I don't see Bob Arum and Richard Schaefer making a deal on that fight. Why? They can make money with other fighters. They can talk all that they want. I've heard that already for a year. But there's a size difference. Canelo is not a middleweight. He's just come up from 147. Chavez is bigger. He's getting better.

"They fight on different networks in Mexico. It's just a mess of a deal to make between the television in Mexico and the promoters involved who have no desire to work with each other. As much as we would all like to see it, those of us who follow boxing regularly, and as much as the Mexican fight fans want to see it, it's not a huge fight in the United States for those who are non-Mexican. So how much money is there really in the fight?

"How much does it do on pay per view? Enough for them to actually put their differences aside? It's not some megafight that is going to do a million buys. It will do numbers – maybe a few hundred thousand. But right now, the finances of what it will generate, combined with the promoters involved, combined with Mexican television, combined with the size difference, combined with the fact that they're still young, and starting out as guys that have belts. And they both have other guys that they can fight.

"They can talk all they want, I don't see it happening for a while." ■

WHO'S B

A COMPARISON OF ALVAREZ AND CHAVEZ IN 20 CATEGORIES TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF HOW THEY WOULD MATCH UP IN THE RING.

By: **Doug Fischer**

A showdown between Saul Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. is a natural fight to make. Alvarez and Chavez are young, unbeaten titleholders with crowd-pleasing styles. They also happen to be the two most popular fighters from Mexico and both have a degree of worldwide fame – Chavez because he is the son of a national idol and arguably the greatest Mexican fighter ever; Alvarez because of his nationally televised success while still in his teens and, let's face it, his hair.

Both fighters enjoyed break-out years in 2011. Alvarez won four HBO-televised bouts: a one-sided decision over Matthew Hatton that earned him the vacant WBC 154-pound belt in March, which was followed by three title defenses against RING-rated contender Ryan Rhodes (TKO 12) in June, rugged Alfonso Gomez (TKO 6) in September, and former welterweight beltholder Kermit Cintron (TKO 5) in November.

Chavez fought three times: a decision over tough Billy Lyell (UD 10) in January, a hard-fought majority decision over RING-rated Sebastian Zbik that earned him the WBC middleweight title in June, and a title defense against fringe contender Peter Manfredo Jr. (TKO 5) in November.

They were seen as prospects – as untested hype jobs by some – at the beginning of 2011. However, both were viewed as top fighters in their respective divisions by the end of the year. If they fight now, all the fans in Mexico will tune in. If they wait a year, all the fans in the world might be drawn to their showdown. Then again, why wait? Alvarez has 40 fights. Chavez has

ETTER?

45. How many more fights do these guys need before they're ready to risk those unbeaten records? They might as well risk it against each other in a huge fight.

Here's how they match up in 20 categories, both physical and intangible, with each fighter rated on a scale of 0 to 5. (A score of 100 would denote the perfect fighter. Neither of them is perfect, which is one of the reasons the two should make for a good fight if they ever meet in the ring.)

HAND SPEED

Neither fighter is a speed demon, but Alvarez's hands are noticeably faster. The naturally smaller fighter puts his punches together with a quickness and fluidity that Chavez, who isn't as slow as some critics deem him, does not seem to be gifted with.

ALVAREZ 3.5 | CHAVEZ 2.5

FOOTWORK

Alvarez and Chavez are aggressive boxer-punchers who prefer to stalk forward but both have shown the ability to stick and move when necessary. Alvarez, who tends to utilize lateral movement more in his fights than Chavez does, is clearly more comfortable and adept at using his feet to control a fight. Chavez moved well against Manfredo, and in spots against Zbik, but he plodded through most of his previous fights.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 3.0

POWER (LEAD HAND)

Both young Mexicans uphold the national tradition of wielding a powerful left hook. Both go to the body well with this power punch. Alvarez tends to double and triple it up to the body and head, while Chavez is more consistent with the punch in every round.

ALVAREZ 4.5 | CHAVEZ 4.5

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. needed only five rounds to take out Peter Manfredo Jr. in November. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

POWER (TRAIL HAND)

Alvarez and Chavez have crisp, accurate right hands that they probably don't use enough. Alvarez's right is faster and straighter, and he counters with it better than Chavez does. However, Chavez crosses his right better, is able to lead with it and uses it to set up other power punches more than Alvarez does.

ALVAREZ 3.5 | CHAVEZ 3.5

JAB

Chavez has an effective jab when he uses it but often neglects boxing's most basic punch. Alvarez possesses a hard, busy jab that he uses to control the distance and often the tempo of his fights. He also uses it to set up his combinations.

ALVAREZ 4.5 | CHAVEZ 3.5

HOOK

Alvarez and Chavez utilize the hook, arguably their best punch, with equal effectiveness. Both need to sharpen up their technique on the punch, but despite telegraphing it at times and being a little wide with the delivery, both fighters are surprisingly accurate with the shot.

ALVAREZ 4.5 | CHAVEZ 4.5

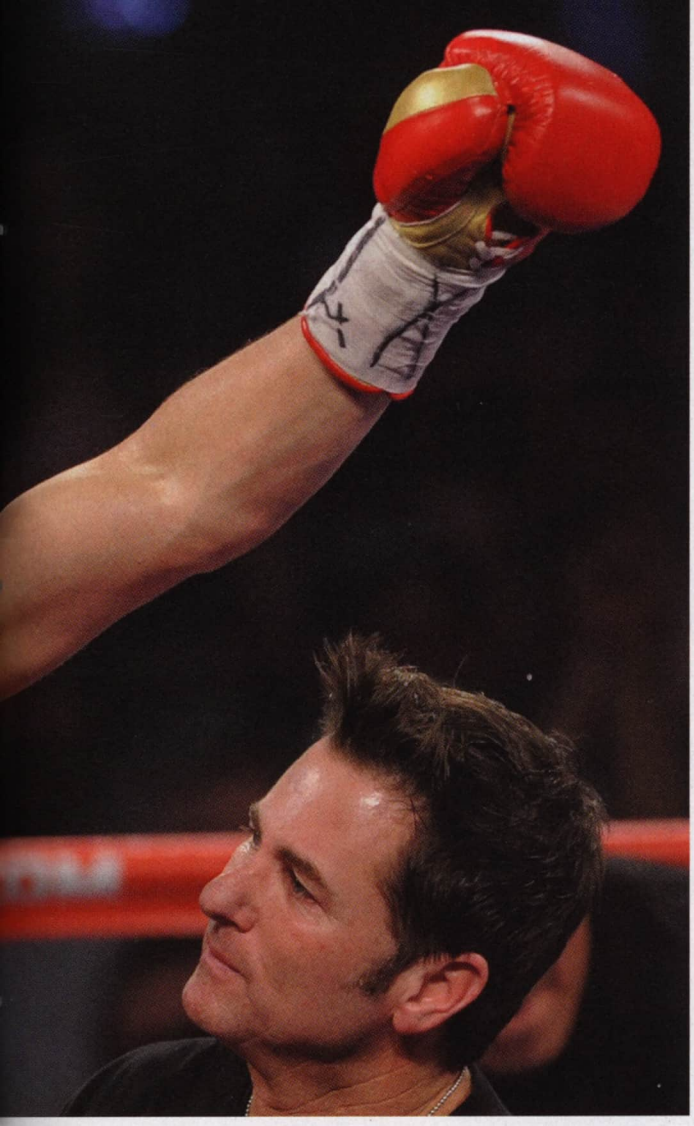
CROSS/UPPERCUT

It's clear that Chavez did not inherit his old man's power, balance or ability to cut the ring off, but he emulates Senior's right cross and uppercut (from either hand) to a tee. His uppercuts are always compact and usually delivered with maximum leverage. Alvarez probably has a better right cross, if only because he's faster and flashier with it and he uses the punch more often. Alvarez does a good job of mixing uppercuts in with his combinations.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 4.5

BODYPUNCHING

If there is one aspect of Chavez's style that makes his father proud, it has to be the young man's committed body attack. Junior's consistent two-fisted assault to Zbik's midsection enabled him to take the late rounds



in the very close fight and was probably the key to winning his first major title. Alvarez is also an excellent body puncher, although he's more choosey of when to rip a shot to an opponent's rib cage than Chavez is.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 4.5

INFIGHTING SKILLS

Despite standing at least 6-foot-1, Chavez is more at home banging away on the inside than he is utilizing his considerable height and reach by boxing at a distance. Who can blame him? His dad was an all-time great infighter. Why not try to copy the best? Chavez is getting better at boxing from the outside, but he still exhibits his best technique when fighting in close. Alvarez is effective in close and at range, so he seldom commits to staying in his opponent's chest.

ALVAREZ 3.5 | CHAVEZ 4.0

ATHLETICISM

Alvarez is by no means gifted with elite talent but is clearly more athletic than Chavez. The plucky redhead has better speed, reflexes, balance, timing, rhythm and hand-eye coordination than his naturally bigger rival, who until recently boxed in very methodical fashion.

ALVAREZ 3.5 | CHAVEZ 2.5

ENDURANCE

Chavez's endurance has dramatically improved since he added conditioning guru Alex Ariza to his team, but it's not in his nature to fight hard for 12 rounds (although he can if pushed by a world-class fighter, as Zbik did). Chavez has acquitted himself well when fighting the championship distance but he's only fought past 10 rounds twice. He faded in some of his previous 10-round bouts. Alvarez has been fighting the 12-round distance since 2007, and even as a 17 year old, he was able to push the pace in every round and close strong when he needed to. Alvarez has fought past 10 rounds seven times and has scored three post-10th round stoppages over solid opposition.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 3.0

ABILITY TO SLIP AND BLOCK PUNCHES

Alvarez has decent head- and upper-body movement. He even occasionally employs a shoulder roll to avoid incoming punches. And while he doesn't remind anyone of Floyd Mayweather Jr. when he does it, at least Alvarez tries protect his head during his fights. That much couldn't be said of Chavez until his most recent fight (against Manfredo). He had about as much head movement as a mannequin when he fought Zbik, who seemed to land every one-two combination he launched in Chavez's direction. Chavez blocks punches well, as does Alvarez, but he's still vulnerable whenever he lets his hands go.

ALVAREZ 3.0 | CHAVEZ 2.5

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Alvarez has the edge in this category simply because he works harder. Chavez has the advantage of having one of the best conditioning coaches in the sport guiding him in the gym, but Ariza can't force Chavez to push himself every day during training camp. Although Chavez has matured a lot over the past year, he still has the reputation of a privileged kid who only works as hard as he wants to and often lets his conditioning go between camps. Despite his fame, Alvarez has the work ethic of an unknown prospect who desperately wants to make his name and leave his mark on the sport. He works very hard in camp and welcomes challenges from his trainers, conditioning coaches and sparring partners. Alvarez's hard work has paid off. He's never run out of gas during a fight, as Chavez did against Matt Vanda in their first bout.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 3.0

Saul Alvarez's sensational sixth-round knockout of **Carlos Baldomir** in 2010 was a big step in his young career. Image: / **Getty Images**

POISE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Chavez grew up with a national hero for a father and a famous last name. Being in the public eye and dealing with high expectations is second nature to him, so he does well with external pressures. So does Alvarez, who has fought on network television in Mexico since he was a teen. Both fighters deal with pressure in the ring well, too. Chavez never backed down from a fight, even when he wasn't in tiptop shape. Alvarez handled his first wobbly moment (in the first round of his fight with Jose Cotto on the Mayweather-Shane Mosley undercard) and came back strong in the very next round.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 4.0

KILLER INSTINCT

Both fighters have the natural inclination to take out their opponents once they've hurt them, as evidenced by the ruthless manner in which Alvarez pounced on Gomez and Cintron after he rocked both veterans, and the quickness with which Chavez overwhelmed Manfredo along the ropes after he wobbled the fringe contender.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 4.0

INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC DEXTERITY

Chavez's boxing skills finally appear to be developing thanks to the efforts of Freddie Roach, but until he consistently employs a sound game plan and shows the ability to adapt to different situations, it's safe to say that Alvarez is the better ring general of the two. Alvarez is constantly striving to improve his ring IQ, which is why he often employs numerous ring tactics during his fights – even when it probably suits him to merely attack his opponent (as in the Gomez fight).

ALVAREZ 3.5 | CHAVEZ 2.5

CHIN AND RESILIENCE

Alvarez took the best shots that Cintron and Rhodes, two respectable veteran punchers, had to offer, but he was

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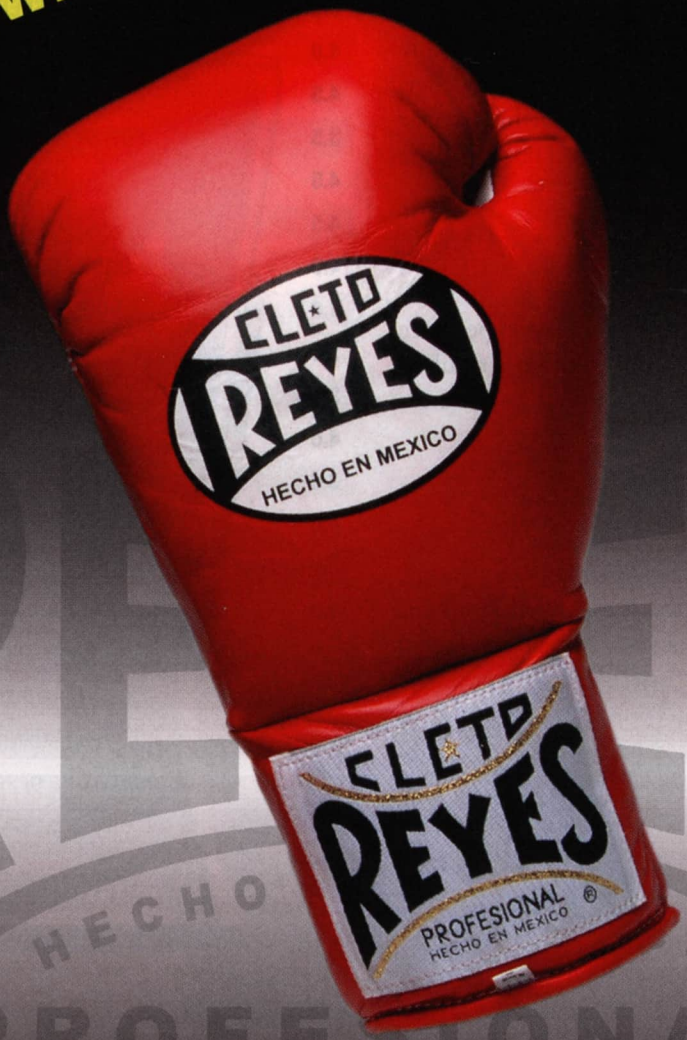

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badly wobbled by Cotto, who is a natural lightweight. Alvarez recovered well from his near disastrous first round against Cotto and wound up stopping the Puerto Rican in the ninth round of a fight he took over in the second round. Apart from a very brief moment against hard-punching fringe contender John Duddy during their 10-rounder in 2010, Chavez has never been visibly rocked in a pro bout. Zbik is not a power puncher, but the well-conditioned German standout hit Chavez with everything and couldn't budge him. The son of the legend seems to take a pretty good shot.

ALVAREZ 3.0 | CHAVEZ 4.0

EXPERIENCE

Both fighters made up for a lack of amateur experience with long pro development periods that have resulted in a lot of rounds for their age. Alvarez has 248 rounds under his belt. Chavez has 211.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 3.5

QUALITY OF OPPONENTS

Of the two, Chavez, the fighter with the bigger name, was more protected during the early portion of his career than Alvarez was. Thus, Alvarez began facing formidable opponents and ranked fighters before Chavez did. Alvarez has fought four major titleholders, including Cintron and former welterweight champ Carlos Baldomir, as well as current lightweight titleholder Miguel Vazquez early in his career. He has also fought solid opponents such as Hatton, Euri Gonzalez and Larry Mosley. Chavez has fought one major titleholder, Zbik. He twice fought current RING-ranked junior middleweight Carlos Molina, who held him to a six-round draw and lost a six-round split decision, early in their careers, and has faced a few notables, including Duddy and Manfredo.

ALVAREZ 3.5 | CHAVEZ 3.0

CORNER

Jose and Edison Reynoso, the father-and-son team that train Alvarez, have obviously done a terrific job developing the raw teenager into a world-class fighter. Jose, who is based in Guadalajara, also guided the careers of former titleholders Oscar Larios and Javier Jauregui. Edison, also known as "Eddy," currently trains Japanese star Koki Kameda. However, apart from Emanuel Steward, no other trainer – or even training duo – can match the accomplishments of Roach, who began training Chavez in 2010. The five-time trainer of the year has brought the best out of Chavez so far, and believes the 25 year old will continue to improve.

ALVAREZ 4.0 | CHAVEZ 5.0

GRADES AT A GLANCE

SAUL ALVAREZ		JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.
3.5	HAND SPEED	2.5
4.0	FOOTWORK	3.0
4.5	POWER (LEAD HAND)	4.5
3.5	POWER (TRAIL HAND)	3.5
4.5	JAB	3.5
4.5	HOOK	4.5
4.0	CROSS/UPPERCUT	4.5
4.0	BODY PUNCHING	4.5
3.5	INFIGHTING SKILLS	4.0
3.5	ATHLETICISM	2.5
4.0	ENDURANCE	3.0
3.0	ABILITY TO SLIP / BLOCK PUNCHES	2.5
4.0	PHYSICAL CONDITION	3.0
4.0	POISE / ABILITY TO COPE W/ EXTERNAL PRESSURES	4.0
4.0	KILLER INSTINCT	4.0
3.5	INTELLIGENCE / STRATEGIC DEXTERITY	2.5
3.0	CHIN / RESILIENCE	4.0
4.0	EXPERIENCE	3.5
3.5	QUALITY OF OPPONENTS	3.0
4.0	CORNER	5.0
76.5	TOTAL	71.5

TOTALS

ALVAREZ 76.5 (3.8 AVERAGE)
CHAVEZ 71.5 (3.6 AVERAGE)

SUMMARY AND PREDICTION

So Alvarez edges Chavez out in terms of grade tallies. It doesn't mean everyone should bet on him if the fight ever happens. Whatever advantages Alvarez has in speed, footwork, conditioning and overall athleticism could easily be negated by the natural size and weight advantages that Chavez, a very big middleweight who often puts on as much as 20 pounds between the weigh-in and the fight, will bring to the contest. Bottom line: this is a good matchup that should produce one hell of a fight. Let's hope it happens.

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Marty Servo (right) was a fine boxer but he wasn't in the class of a young **Sugar Ray Robinson.**

Image: **THE RING**

PERFECTION VS. PERFECTION

5 FIGHTS IN WHICH YOUNG, UNBEATEN BOXERS – LIKE ALVAREZ AND CHAVEZ – WAGED WAR

By **Don Stradley**

As talk begins of a showdown between Saul Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., one can look to boxing's past to find other examples of young, undefeated fighters squaring off.

Such bouts have always generated excitement, as one of the fighters will be faced with the drama of his first defeat. Granted, the fights aren't always history-making – last year's encounter between Timothy Bradley and Devon Alexander comes to mind – but more often than not these bouts are memorable for a variety of reasons.

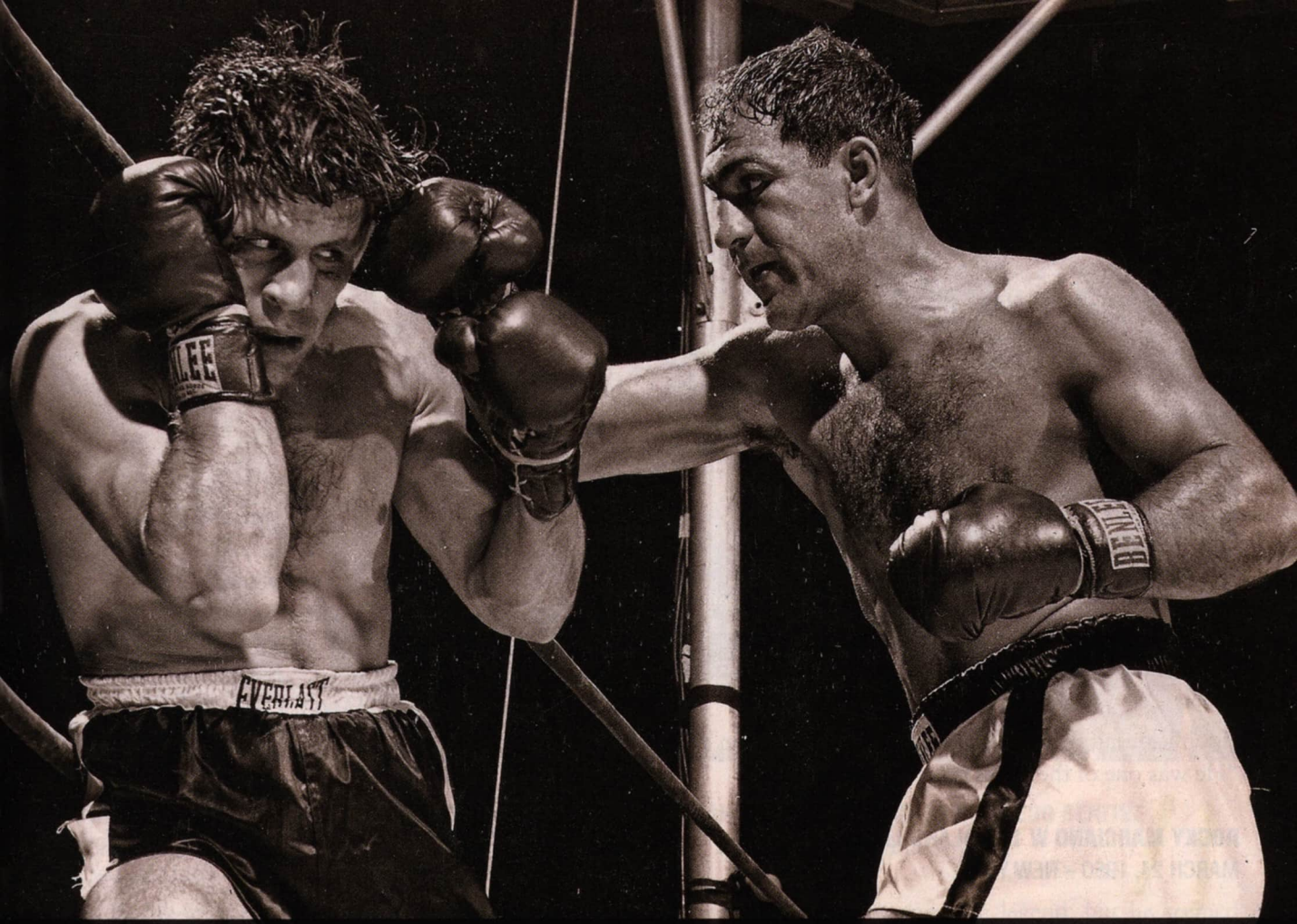
The eerie pattern that emerges when looking at the bouts on the following pages is that the winners usually went on to greater glories, while the losers struggled to get their careers back on course. Maybe there is so much emotional involvement in fights of this nature that the loss is shattering to one's confidence. An older fighter has the maturity to recover from defeat, but younger men have difficulty. To make matters worse, the fickle public tends to write the loser off, and promoters have trouble selling him a second time around.

We won't predict a winner between Chavez and Alvarez. But we can almost predict with certainty that the loser will have a difficult future.

Here are five fights from the past involving young, unbeaten rivals:

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON W 10 MARTY SERVO
SEPT. 25, 1941 – PHILADELPHIA

Although Servo hasn't been treated well by the passage of time, the baby-faced banger from Schenectady, N.Y., was a rising contender in 1941. "Cool, confident, and polished, with a swift and accurate left hook," was how revered columnist Red Smith described him, adding, "Marty was an excellent fighter who believed with all his heart that he could whip any man his size in the world." Servo's rigid self-belief was well-founded, for in 1941



Rocky Marciano's victory over **Roland LaStarza** (left) was a breakthrough in the career of the great heavyweight. **Image:** THE RING

the 21-year-old was unbeaten in 44 bouts. A cousin of former lightweight champion Lou Ambers, Servo was a pupil of the wily Charlie Goldman, who had trained Ambers and would someday train Rocky Marciano.

Herman Taylor, the behemoth of Philadelphia boxing promoters, wanted to match Servo against 20-year-old Robinson for the first indoor show of the season. Robinson, undefeated in 24 bouts, had fought in Philadelphia a few times, as had Servo. But while both were familiar to Philly fight buffs, Servo apparently wasn't privy to the glowing press reports that made Robinson seem like a wunderkind -- or perhaps he just wasn't intimidated. Even as Servo entered the bout as a 5-1 betting underdog, the fight was generating a buzz.

"Great rewards await the victor, for neither the sensational Robinson nor the steady Servo has ever been defeated," wrote a columnist from the Chester Times, adding that none of Robinson's previous opponents "possessed the physical strength, boxing skill, ring savvy, or iron chin of Servo," and that the bout promised "to mark the dawn of a new ring era."

By the time the bell rang to end the 10th and final frame, the 11,000 at Philadelphia's Convention Hall had witnessed an intense bout, won by Robinson via decision. Scoring by rounds, referee Irving Kutcher and judges Al Volce and Frank Kanersborough turned in official scorecards of 7-2-1, 4-3-3, and 8-2, all for Robinson. But even though UPI wrote that Robinson was "too heavily gunned for Servo and won going away," most agreed that it had been a closer bout than the scorecards indicated. Syndicated columnist Jack Cuddy wrote that Servo "gave Robinson the hardest fight of his career"

They fought again in 1942. Robinson won, but this time the crowd jeered the split decision verdict. Robinson went on to have a sterling career, winning the welterweight title and then making history by winning the middleweight crown five times.

After serving in the Coast Guard during the war, Servo returned to win the welterweight title from Freddie Cochrane. He didn't hold it for long -- a badly injured nose caused him to shuffle off into early retirement.

▶ A showdown between KO artists **Alfonso Zamora** (left) and **Carlos Zarate** was fun while it lasted. Zarate stopped Zamora in four. Image: **THE RING**

Upon learning of Servo's death in 1969, Robinson said, "He was one of the finest fellows I ever fought."

ROCKY MARCIANO W 10 ROLAND LASTARZA
MARCH 24, 1950 – NEW YORK

Although 22-year-old LaStarza had run up a 37-0 record against weak opposition, he was regarded by some as the nation's top young heavyweight in 1950. Marciano, another young heavyweight at 26, was a different story. Although he was unbeaten in 25 bouts, he was an unsophisticated slugger and had not yet won over the press. Still, the idea of two unbeaten heavyweights colliding at Madison Square Garden was pretty tasty. Both were ex-GIs, both were Italian, and both were being touted as future opponents for reigning champion Ezzard Charles. NBC televised the bout in more than 20 cities.

Marciano had fought in New York before, but this was his first big fight in the Garden, and the 13,658 in attendance seemed hostile toward him. He'd admitted before the fight that he was nervous. He'd had a disastrous time in his previous bout, a sixth round KO of Carmen Vingo. That bout had been so savage that Vingo ended up in a coma. He survived, but the experience upset Marciano and allegedly hampered his training for LaStarza. He'd also injured his left hand against Vingo, which made training even more difficult.

As expected, LaStarza jumped out to an early lead, hammering Marciano with his jab.

Marciano finally came alive in the fourth, breaking past LaStarza's offense and landing several hard punches. The rally left LaStarza bloody and on the canvas for a quick count. LaStarza did well during the next few rounds, but Marciano struck again in the eighth, wobbling LaStarza. Marciano saw his handiwork undone when referee Jack Watson penalized him for a low blow.

After Marciano won the ninth round big, LaStarza roared out for the last frame and rumbled with Marciano. Surprisingly, LaStarza got the best of it until the end of the round when Marciano landed a titanic left hook that caught LaStarza flush and nearly put him down. It was, like many of the previous rounds, a difficult one to score.

There was some controversy when ring announcer Johnny Addie announced Marciano as the winner by split decision. Many felt LaStarza had won. The New York Herald Tribune called the verdict "a miscarriage of justice." Meanwhile, Marciano supporters felt their man was criticized because of his rough style, which admittedly wasn't attractive.

Recalling the bout in 2003, LaStarza said, "Losing the decision like that was a real blow because I was sure I had won the fight."

Marciano went on to become a popular champion. One of his defenses was against LaStarza. This time he stopped LaStarza in 11. There was no controversy.

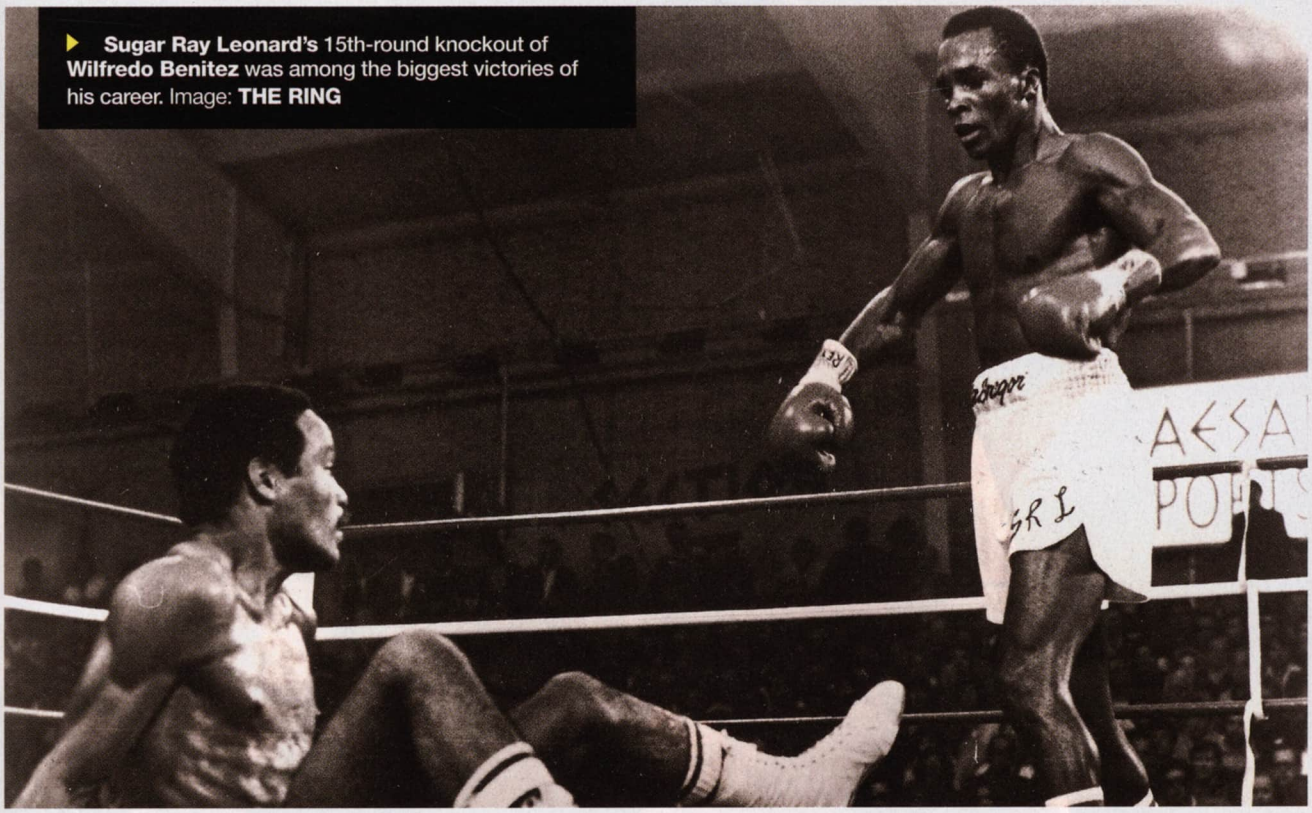
CARLOS ZARATE KO 4 ALFONSO ZAMORA
APRIL 23, 1977 – INGLEWOOD, CALIF.

How fortunate it was that two of the deadliest punchers in the history of the bantamweight class happened to be fighting in the same era, and both were headquartered in California. Zarate was the WBC titleholder; Zamora owned the WBA belt. Inglewood Forum promoter Don Fraser knew that matching "The Z-Boys" would create sparks, especially among Mexican fans. He spent a year haggling over the details and eventually made the surprise decision to stage the bout as a non-title event.

"They wanted $200,000 each to fight for their titles," Fraser said at the time. "I got 'em at an end-of-the-month bargain special, at $125,000 each. ... But I always felt that for this fight you didn't need a title at stake."

Fraser came up with an alternative: The winner would receive the "Manuel Ortiz Memorial Trophy," in memory of the first bantam champion of Mexican descent.

Fans didn't need a title or a trophy. They knew that the winner would be the top bantamweight. They also knew a fight between unbeaten knockout artists would be dynamic for as long as it lasted. Zarate had stopped 44 of 45 opponents; Zamora had stopped 29 of 29. It was safe to say Fraser didn't need to hire ringside judges.



Sugar Ray Leonard's 15th-round knockout of **Wilfredo Benitez** was among the biggest victories of his career. Image: **THE RING**

The 21-year-old Zamora and 25-year-old Zarate had been friends and stablemates in the past, but there was some friction involving Zarate's manager, Cuyo Hernandez. Hernandez had previously managed Zamora, but depending on who told the story, Zamora's father either fired Hernandez, or Hernandez quit because of the older man's meddling. Now Hernandez worked for Zarate, which led to a lot of pre-fight hostility and name calling.

The crowd of 13,996 was somewhat less than Fraser had anticipated, but the fight was certainly memorable. During the first round, a man wearing only shorts and a dirty undershirt jumped into the ring, which caused a delay as police dragged him out. The battle resumed, and Zarate took control. By the fourth Zamora had been knocked down three times; Zamora's father finally threw in the towel to signify surrender.

That was not the end, though. Zamora's father ran into the ring and attacked Hernandez. The melee was broken up, but Zamora Sr. insisted Hernandez had put something on Zarate's gloves that blinded his son. Zamora's new manager, Pancho Rosales, threatened to file a protest about Zarate's fouling. He demanded a rematch, claiming Zamora was on the verge of winning when the audience member had interrupted the bout. Nothing came of his complaints. In fact, Zamora's career fizzled out after this bout.

When asked for a comment on his win, Zarate said, "We were such good friends. I felt bad."

SUGAR RAY LEONARD KO 15 WILFREDO BENITEZ
NOV. 30, 1979 – LAS VEGAS

Leonard was not the son of a legend, but he seemed to be a golden child in his own right. Just a few years out of the 1976 Olympics, Leonard had been the recipient of an unofficial yet very obvious passing of the torch from Muhammad Ali, the previous era's most famous fighter. Leonard had Ali's trainer, Angelo Dundee, acting as an advisor, and he had developed an on-air relationship with ABC commentator Howard Cosell, who had previously been one of Ali's greatest supporters. By 1979, all Leonard needed was a title to complete the picture.

Enter Benitez of Puerto Rico. He'd been only 17 when he won a junior welterweight title, and by 19 he had scored a welterweight belt. Benitez was 21 when Leonard challenged him, but he seemed much older and more experienced than the 23-year-old Leonard. Benitez, undefeated in 39 bouts, was preternaturally gifted, and cocky to boot. But Benitez's cockiness would be his undoing. Legend has it that Benitez didn't take Leonard seriously. Despite this being the richest non-heavyweight bout up to that time, with each fighter earning approximately a million dollars, Benitez allegedly returned from a seven-month hiatus and trained for a mere nine days. Leonard, of course, was as determined as he would ever be in his career. This was his first title bout. He was not going to blow it.

Donald Curry was at his peak when he stopped **Milton McCrory** in 1985. Image: **THE RING**

The early rounds saw both fighters sizing each other up for several seconds at a time before making a move. As William Nack of *Sports Illustrated* wrote, "It was an odd fight, with much parrying and displays of ring craft, and hard to judge. Neither man dominated."

Leonard put Benitez on the canvas briefly during the third, which seemed to bring Benitez to life. The Puerto Rican started scoring with right hands, and Leonard found himself unable to hit Benitez in return. Even after a clash of heads left Benitez with a bloody forehead, he continued grinning as Leonard tried in vein to catch him. 4,600 enthralled fans watched as the drama slowly unfolding at Caesars Palace climbed to a crescendo. The payoff came in the 15th when Leonard and Benitez began the most heated battling of the fight. After several furious exchanges, Leonard finally dropped Benitez with an uppercut. Benitez wearily made it to his feet and braced himself for another Leonard attack, but referee Carlos Padilla stopped the bout at 2:54 of the 15th.

Leonard was the new WBC welterweight champion. He would go on to become the face of boxing for several years. Benitez remained relevant for a few years, but showed a dramatic decline in skills and was later diagnosed with boxing-related brain damage. On a side note, Benitez dated Leonard's sister Sharon for a while. He really did.

DONALD CURRY KO 2 MILTON MCCRORY
DEC. 6, 1985 – LAS VEGAS

Even their nicknames were dramatic and loaded with menace: Curry was "The Cobra," and McCrory was "The Ice Man."

The bout had been one of the most anticipated of the year. But WBA welterweight titlist Curry and WBC titlist McCrory were not only coming together to unify the welterweight titles for the first time since Ray Leonard's retirement in 1982. The winner would undoubtedly go on to become the next big boxing star of the 1980s. Curry, in particular, was already being touted as the next Leonard. He was quiet and well-mannered, and had a clean, efficient boxing style that had kept him undefeated in 23 bouts. McCrory, undefeated in 28 bouts, was being groomed as the next big star out of Detroit, reminding many of Kronk stablemate Tommy Hearns. Naturally, pundits thought of this bout as a sort of embryonic Leonard-Hearns, hoping that it would create the same sort of classic drama, or perhaps begin a memorable series.

It didn't.

"I WISHED THEY HAD STOPPED IT AFTER THE FIRST KNOCKDOWN."
– DONALD CURRY

Curry, a 4-1 favorite, dominated the first round, overpowering McCrory with surprising ease. Midway through the second, Curry started McCrory's downfall with a monstrous left hook. McCrory crumpled to the canvas, but rose on unsteady legs. When referee Mills Lane ordered the bout to continue, the methodical Curry strolled forward and finished the job. *Sports Illustrated*'s Pat Putnam wrote, "This time it was Curry's right fist that caught McCrory's head, snapping it violently sideways and dropping the fighter into the world of losers for the first time in his 29-bout pro career."

It was as sudden and shocking an ending as boxing fans had seen in a major fight for many years. It was also scary, as McCrory spent more than two minutes on the canvas being examined by the ringside doctor.

"I wished they had stopped it after the first knockdown," Curry said the next day. He and McCrory had been friends since their amateur days, and Curry worried that such a devastating knockout might have an adverse effect on his old buddy.

McCrory rebounded somewhat, but was never again part of boxing's A-list. He may have taken solace in the fact that Curry didn't springboard to stardom, either, for if the Ice Man responded to his big chance by melting, the Cobra was soon to lose his fangs. Unlike most other victors in bouts between undefeated young stars, Curry floundered during the next few years and was himself the victim of some nasty knockouts.

But on the night they met in a bout advertised as "The Tossup," Curry and McCrory were 24 and 23, young and unbeaten, and would never again be so bursting with promise. ■

THE INEVITABLE DECLINE?

THE FACT MANNY PACQUIAO HAS BEEN CAREFULLY MATCHED THE PAST FEW YEARS MIGHT'VE MASKED A DOWNWARD SLIDE

By: **Ron Borges**

At some point the ravages of time and the demands of a profession that is relentlessly and ruthlessly about diminishing returns takes a toll on every boxer. Greatness will sustain the best fighters longer than most, keeping them at or near the top even when they are past their prime. Yet in the end the clock always wins. The calendar, like Marciano and few others, remains undefeated.

Eventually those forces grind down everyone, be they Sugar Ray Robinson, Sugar Ray Leonard or Sugar Ray Seales. There are no exceptions, although every great fighter seems to feel for a time that he will be the first. Superior skill, devastating punching power, relentlessness or overarching heart have always carried them to victory, so they come to feel they are superior life forms, different from the rest. For a time it is true and so they think they will be the one fighter whose skills do not diminish before the desire to exhibit them does. Most often they are wrong. Roy Jones, Jr. and Evander Holyfield haven't come to fully appreciate the ravages of time yet, deluding themselves about who they now are, but the process of unraveling

The momentum **Manny Pacquiao** has built the past few years almost came to a grinding halt in his third fight with **Juan Manuel Marquez.**

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

SUSPECT OPPOSITION?

Here are Manny Pacquiao's last eight opponents, with the reasons they were suspect.

IMAGE: FIGHTWIREIMAGES

DAVID DIAZ | JUNE 28, 2008 | TKO 9
WHY SUSPECT: Diaz had narrowly outpointed Erik Morales and was deemed physically stronger than Pacquiao, who was moving up to lightweight. However, we all know Diaz has limited ability.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA | DEC. 6, 2008 | TKO 8
WHY SUSPECT: De La Hoya was thought to be too big for Pacquiao, who was the underdog, but the six-division champion had clearly lost a step. A subpar performance against limited Steve Forbes in his previous fight proved that. Plus, De La Hoya drained himself making weight.

RICKY HATTON | MAY 2, 2009 | KO 2
WHY SUSPECT: Hatton, who like De La Hoya had already lost to Floyd Mayweather Jr., was strong and rugged but his aggressive style and relative lack of speed was tailor made for Pacquiao. Plus, he had to lose a tremendous amount of weight for the fight. The Briton never fought again after Pacquiao.

Manny Pacquiao didn't appear to be pleased with his performance against **Juan Manuel Marquez** afterward.

Image: **Chris Cozzone / Fightwireimages**

began for them long ago and is now playing out a familiar story that almost always ends the same way – with a once-great fighter wearing sunglasses at midnight.

Although it is sacrilege these days to suggest this, one has to wonder if that time is now approaching for 33-year-old Manny Pacquiao. After another uneven performance against Juan Manuel Marquez on Nov. 12, in which Pacquiao was awarded a hotly disputed majority decision that left him 2-0-1 against Marquez without having yet settled the issue of who is the superior fighter, some have dismissed Pacquiao's problem that night as merely a style conflict.

They argue that Pacquiao remains the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world but Marquez simply has a counter-punching approach difficult for him to solve. As his trainer, Freddie Roach, admitted, "He has Manny's number. They could fight 100 times and they'll always be close fights. I thought this time, with the size and age difference, Manny was going to knock him out. I was very surprised. I predicted it wouldn't go six rounds. I couldn't have been more wrong. This one might have been the closest (of the three). If we didn't win the last round, it might have been a draw or gone the other way.

"Manny was being careful, cautious. He knew when he landed punches Marquez rallies right back. Manny kept moving to his left too much, right into Marquez's right hand. We worked on that but he fell right into that old trap of the first two fights. Manny has difficulties with counter punchers. We need to get to work on how to deal with counter punchers. I got to do my job a little better."

That critique has some basis in fact but Marquez was a 38-year-old, 9-1 underdog at the time, someone who had been chased out of the ring by Floyd Mayweather Jr. two years earlier at the same weight, and was life and death with Michael Katsidis for much of their fight a year ago until Marquez got off the floor to stop him in nine hard rounds.

Certainly it would be unfair and erroneous to say a third struggle with Marquez proved Pacquiao is a shot fighter, but slippage has been apparent for some time and, quite frankly, is predictable when you look at his career. Pacquiao has been fighting for 17 years and few of his fights have been boxing lessons. For all the damage he has done to others in building up a 54-3-2 record with 38 knockouts, he has sustained damage as well. No fighter with his aggressive style and 17 years of tread wear on his legs is improving at age 33. In fact, it has seemed obvious this past year that he has begun to slow and is being hit more than ever.

So the question is not if Pacquiao is slipping, but how severe is that slippage and how carefully can he be matched to minimize the problems created by it?

As popular as Pacquiao has become and as much of a phenomenon as he is, the truth is he has been carefully matched for some time by promoter Bob Arum, the edge in most of his fights over the past four years consistently being on his side, sometimes comfortably so. Pacquiao has been fed big names at the end of their careers (Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, Ricky Hatton), forced opponents to meet him at uncomfortable catch weights that were all to his advantage, or faced fighters who frankly had more hype than hope (David Diaz, Joshua Clottey, Antonio Margarito).

That sentence will drive many in boxing mad but the question remains: Is he what the public has been led to believe he is? Only time and probably a fight with Mayweather will answer that, but a careful examination of Pacquiao's resume the past four years should make you think.

Of his eight opponents, two retired after he beat them in one-sided fashion (De La Hoya and Hatton). Both had

MIGUEL COTTO | NOV. 14, 2009 | TKO 12
WHY SUSPECT: Cotto probably was the best of this bunch but had struggled to beat Joshua Clottey in his previous fight and took a bad beating from Antonio Margarito three fights earlier.

JOSHUA CLOTTEY | MARCH 13, 2010 | UD 12
WHY SUSPECT: Clottey did well in defeat against Miguel Cotto and beat Zab Judah in a truncated bout, but was never considered a top-tier fighter. He did little more than cover up against Pacquiao.

ANTONIO MARGARITO | NOV. 13, 2010 | UD 12
WHY SUSPECT: Margarito had had only one tune-up fight after almost two years out of boxing when he faced Pacquiao. His lack of speed also made him a sitting duck. He is 1-3 (0-3 against quality opposition) since he was caught with illegal pads in his gloves.

SHANE MOSLEY | MAY 7, 2011 | UD 12
WHY SUSPECT: Mosley was 39 and had lost a step when he faced Pacquiao. The three-division titleholder was 0-1-1 in his previous two fights, losing badly to Floyd Mayweather Jr. and drawing with Sergio Mora.

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ | NOV. 12, 2011 | MD 12
WHY SUSPECT: Marquez was 38 and had recently been embarrassed by Mayweather, yet fought Pacquiao on at least even terms.

– THE RING

already been soundly beaten by others. De La Hoya was 2-3 in his last five fights, ending with Pacquiao. Hatton was 2-2 in his last four and had already taken a beating from Mayweather before Pacquiao retired him. Shane Mosley hasn't retired, but is 0-2-1 in his last three outings, the most recent being a Pacquiao fight in which he frankly declined to participate despite hanging around for 12 rounds.

Diaz, a lightweight, was a tough guy but he was the least formidable of the 135-pounders holding belts at the time. He has gone 2-2 since losing to Pacquiao, with a 15-month layoff in between.

Pacquiao faced Clottey nine months after Cotto had given him a beating, proving in both fights that Clottey is the classic B side opponent who never defeats an upper-echelon opponent. As for Antonio Margarito, if the world hasn't yet realized what a fraud (and probably worse) this guy is, then they are not paying attention. Pacquiao beat him as he was coming off an 18-month suspension after being caught wearing loaded hand wraps before a fight with Mosley. Since that time, Margarito is 1-3 and every loss was a one-sided beating (to Mosley, Pacquiao and Cotto). The only one to not stop Margarito? Pacquiao.

This brings us back to Juan Manuel Marquez, against whom Pacquiao has now fought 36 rounds and lost more of them than he won. He has a draw, a split decision and now a majority decision against Marquez and, truth be told, many in boxing believe Marquez won all three fights. Very few would argue he won none.

Following Pacquiao's one-sided win over Mosley last May, Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward was clear in his opinion of what he saw that night.

"I think Manny Pacquiao has slipped a little bit," he told anyone who asked. "He's had a lot of hard fights, and when you have 50 fights, regardless of what type of fights, usually there is little bit of wear and tear."

Steward went on to say that in recent fights "opponents have been very, very carefully selected. It's an unbelievable marketing job on the part of Top Rank. ... His fights as a welterweight have been very carefully picked ... with these weight stipulations like welterweight but not 147 or junior middleweight but not 154. I don't blame him or his promoters. If they can get away with it, great."

True, but such actions call into question just how great today's Pacquiao is. He has not knocked anyone out in more than two years (four fights) and De La Hoya, Hatton, Margarito and Mosley were all shot when he finally faced them. As for Diaz and Clottey, they are what they are.

That leaves Cotto and Marquez as his true tests with the only convincing win the victory over Cotto. Top Rank has done a remarkable job building Pacquiao into the sport's premier gate attraction and someone whose personality has allowed him to transcend boxing to become a crossover superstar. They deserve great credit for that.

So does Pacquiao, because even though he's often been handed clear matchmaking advantages he's won impressively while selling those fights as bigger tests than they were. That's not his fault. It's simply fact. It's also one of the reasons boxing fans now want to see him fight only two guys – Marquez a fourth time or Mayweather a first time. And the latter may never happen because as time drags on more and more things conspire against it.

There is now talk that next May Pacquiao will likely face Marquez again – which could create greater problems for him if it becomes a repeat of the previous three meetings – or junior welterweight titleholder Timothy Bradley, who recently signed with Top Rank for just that purpose. No disrespect to Bradley, but what is he but another blown up junior welterweight with minimal power (12 knockouts in 28 fights and only one the past five years, a stoppage of well-shot Joel Casamayor on the Pacquiao undercard that was meant to sell the public on a potential fight with him)? So was Manny Pacquiao one of the great fighters of his era? Without question. Will he one day enter the Boxing Hall of Fame? Absolutely. But is he also another champion on a downward slide who has been carefully matched for four years now?

Let the record decide. ■

"I THINK MANNY PACQUIAO HAS SLIPPED A LITTLE BIT. HE'S HAD A LOT OF HARD FIGHTS, AND WHEN YOU HAVE 50 FIGHTS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT TYPE OF FIGHTS, USUALLY THERE IS LITTLE BIT OF WEAR AND TEAR." – EMANUEL STEWARD

Nonito Donaire's shutout victory over **Omar Narvaez** in October was almost certainly his last at bantamweight.
Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

INTERVIEW

NONITO DONAIRE

'I'M READY TO CONQUER NEW WORLDS'

By: **Joseph Santoliquito**

Nonito Donaire is one of the best fighters in the world. There's no disputing that. The hardcore boxing public is fully aware of his ability and exploits. He's a huge crossover star in the Philippines—second behind you-know-who. But despite appearing on HBO and being universally considered one of the top five pound-for-pound fighters in the world, the WBC bantamweight world champion still finds himself a bit underappreciated.

A summer contractual war over Donaire, 27-1 (18), between Top Rank and Golden Boy didn't help. The conflict forced "The Filipino Flash" to take an eight-month hiatus as legal entanglements were sorted out. Now that they have, Donaire is eyeing the junior featherweight and featherweight divisions hungrily.

Donaire credits his wife, Rachel, for navigating his career through the storm. Highly confrontational when it comes to defending her husband, she is the other half of one of boxing's most formidable duos. Married civilly in 2008, the two married again in a spectacular fairytale church wedding this past November.

THE RING: How has life changed for you recently?
Nonito Donaire: I got married in a church to my wife, on November 11th, which made it 11-11-11. It's something Rachel and I have been talking about for some time and it's been great. Everything is great. We've been together for a while, and we wanted a real, real wedding, and for Rachel, it was a fairytale come true, something we can remember for the rest of our lives... it was amazing to be in church and say my vows in front of God.

THE RING: Was your father there?
ND: That's an interesting question (*laughs*). Her father was there, my father wasn't (*laughs*). The truth is, we

were helping my father out for a while, and we were in the middle of the Golden Boy-Top Rank feud. We were trying to set my brother Glenn up for a fight through Golden Boy. When we settled everything with Top Rank, the whole thing blew up. Golden Boy pulled out my brother and my father kind of blamed Rachel. I have no idea why he blamed her. It was Rachel who set up the fight and we sent Everlast gear and everything, and ...

Rachel Donaire: Golden Boy secured Glenn a date and we had an opponent and everything. Basically, of course, when we settled things in July with Top Rank, Golden Boy pulled the date and we spoke to Top Rank about arranging a date for Glenn. ... Me and Nonito Sr. I mean never talk, and the next thing I know, Glenn had signed with a manager. ... I texted Nonito Sr. to wish him luck. I left it like that. ... Nonito Sr. accidentally forwarded me a text meant for someone else that said, "Hi Vinnny, I'm forwarding you Nonito Jr.'s wife's text messages, and she's a bitch and a liar."

Nonito wanted to show his brother how to fish, instead of giving him fish every day. ... Glenn and Nonito Sr. wanted things handed to them. We weren't going to do that. Nonito has worked for everything he's achieved.

The next thing you know, Nonito Sr. went public in the Philippines in the newspapers, on gossip websites, he went out of way to outlets like, we'll say the Philippine's TMZ, that he would light a candle to Nonito on the Day of the Dead, because Nonito was dead to him. We let it go in the Philippines. That's all. We tried and that's what bothered me. For me, if you don't like me, say it to my face that I'm a bitch. The moment I can't deliver something, then you stab me in the back.

Nonito thought about hiring his father again for his next fight. And then that text message came in. We tried giving him a chance. That was it. Then I received a text from Nonito's sister about their family not going to the wedding. That was it, it was last we heard from them.

THE RING: It's not a good idea to mess with Rachel is it, when it comes to you?

ND: No, it isn't (*laughs*). She knows when people f--- with me and try to take advantage of me. Rachel will step in and tell people where to go. She can be one of the most powerful women in boxing, I think. Boxing people respect her a lot. She means well and means business. The only thing she cares about is how I am and how I'm treated. There have been new people that have tried

▶ **Nonito Donaire's** second-round knockout of **Fernando Montiel** removed any doubt about his place among the best fighters in the world.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

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to enter the picture, but Rachel screens everyone. She'll say "I don't know about him, or I don't know about that person." There is only person that I listen to and that's Rachel. I have a great core team around me, and I trust my team. But she's the love of my life.

THE RING: Nonito, how have you managed through all of this?

ND: I've gone through a lot. Rachel has done everything for me. I was taken advantage of in the past by my family and Rachel doesn't want that to happen again. I love my family, and I love my wife. My family thinks I'm wearing the skirt, because Rachel calls the shots. I want to help my family, we spoke about putting a stable together and I wanted to give my father a two-percent cut. But this goes way back and it cuts deep.

When I started doing things on my own, that's where the hatred came from. I'm independent now. My father and I always butted heads, and I quit boxing—a few times. My mother would always bring me back. I remember before the (Luis) Maldonado fight, I met my father at this restaurant. My father sitting there at this table and he wanted me to sign a napkin that said he would get a 20-percent cut—before the Maldonado fight. I ran out crying, because I was really hurt. This was a day before I went into the ring. He felt he needed to do that, because Rachel entered my life and I fell in love with her. I couldn't believe it. I was through with boxing.

... I wanted to cut things off with my father a few times, and it was always Rachel that made me reconsider. I know my father: It is play by his rules, or don't play the game at all. I've done everything for my father. I didn't care about money, I never cared about money. I was screwed over, and I still didn't care. Now, I have a bunch of great friends and a core team who love me and would die for me. I want things to be fair.

THE RING: Things are much better with Top Rank these days?

ND: Yes, things are much better. They didn't appreciate me before, or at least the way I felt I should be appreciated. It helped me mentally that I have to be bigger, and that made me work harder as to how people look at me. I've learned to market myself with Rachel around ... I believe I'm here for a bigger reason. I remember Rachel asking me, "Why do you box?" I remember telling her I didn't know. I never saw myself in this position. I never saw myself as ever becoming one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world. I was the kid who used to get picked on as a kid. I never thought I had the talent. I was emotional in the head. I thought I was going to be a loser, flipping burgers for the rest of my life and never thought I'd be anything.

Wladimir Sidorenko went into his fight with **Nonito Donaire** with solid credentials but couldn't survive four full rounds.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

I was one of those kids who didn't believe in himself.

THE RING: How was the Top Rank and Golden Boy fight over you?

ND: I wanted a fight. I went with the flow. In a sense, I was just there and when the struggle came between the two powers, Top Rank suddenly noticed me and gave me my respect. I'm grateful and glad Top Rank made our relationship the way it is today. In a sense, some blood had to be spilled, and glad that they fought for me and everything they did to get me. I saw that. I was thankful Rachel and all my friends were there.

THE RING: Do you regret that it had to go to that extreme?

ND: No, because I saw the many faces of people. I don't regret anything. The only thing I regret is being away from the gym all of that time. I saw different faces of people during that time and was happy I was put through that trial. I'm not the type to get angry. Rachel was angry because she felt I didn't deserve to be treated the way I was.

Rachel: It's funny how I get thrown into things (*laughs*). I don't know anything about anything (*laughs*). I do know I'm a strong female in a male-dominated sport who questions authority of a male figure. They

Fernando Montiel joined a growing list of opponents who couldn't handle **Nonito Donaire's** power. Image: **Getty Images**

automatically think "Who is this woman to question me?" I have nothing to lose. When that whole thing was going on between Top Rank and Golden Boy, Bob Arum dragged me into the mix. He eventually apologized, but I call people out and I don't have a political side. You can't buy my vote. It's the fear of a strong woman in a male-dominated sport. The most important thing is that my husband appreciates me and that's the only thing that matters.

THE RING: Where are things with Top Rank today?

ND: I like the deal, and it was better than the first deal that I had. Top Rank showed their appreciation for me and I'm thankful for that. That whole thing gave me a lesson. It taught me a lot.

THE RING: What are your plans for this year?

ND: I'm moving to 122 and I want to fight the best out there. The Japanese guy (Toshiaki Nishioka) is the best. First, I want to capture a title and then fight the best, and then make a move to 126. I'm hoping to get three HBO dates this year and keep winning. I want to fight a guy who wants to fight, instead of the last fight against (Omar) Narvaez.

It looks like I'm going to fight Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. for the vacant WBA (super bantamweight) title. That

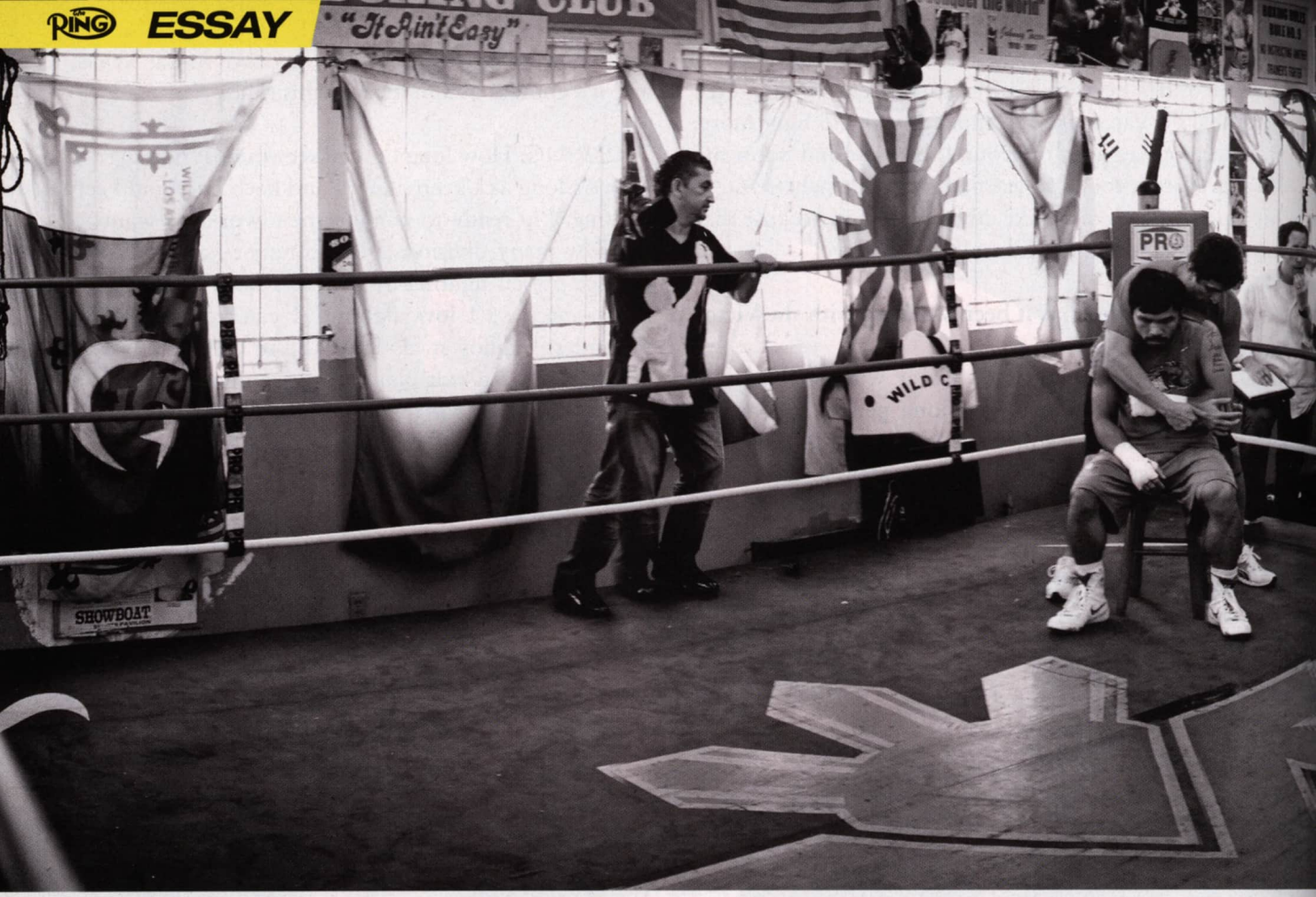
would be a great fight to start at 122. ... I want to bring out the old-school style of fighting every two or three months, if I can make it happen. I want to fight more. I want to cover a lot of ground this year and boost my brand a little, too. I've learned a lot that when you're up there, you have to take advantage of it, because that opportunity won't be there all of the time.

THE RING: How has it been working with the Victor Conte?
ND: I'm still working with Victor with supplements and recovery. I can sustain a long period of training and go all-out and still be able to recover and stay strong. The supplements help me sustain a hard work ethic. But I'm working more on my own in Las Vegas, and it's going a different camp this time.

THE RING: How long do you see yourself fighting?
ND: As long as I keep hungry and keep busy and keep fighting. I'm ready to conquer new worlds. I want to see how many divisions I can conquer—at my best. I can see myself fighting as long as I keep enjoying the game—because I love fighting. I can fight until I'm 40 and still enjoy it, as long as I'm competitive and healthy. I see an exit plan. I can see myself starting a promotional company and moving forward with that. But I'll keep fighting as long as I can. ■

▶ Nonito Donaire has a growing fanbase in his native Philippines.

Image: **Getty Images**



NOT YOUR GRANDFATHER'S BOXING CAPITAL

NOTHING TOPS A BIG FIGHT IN THE BIG APPLE **BUT THE EPICENTER OF THE SPORT HAS SHIFTED TO LA LA LAND**

By: **Gary Poole**

So Paulie Malignaggi of Brooklyn fought this past October. The Italian-American boxer could have been a character in A.J. Liebling's book *The Sweet Science*, the classic about New York boxing in the 1950s and early 1960s. He reminds some fans of a time when New York-based fighters were a bigger part of the boxing story, with the most epic fights happening in Madison Square Garden, still sentimentally referred to as the "Mecca of Boxing." But anyone in the know knows that's just not true anymore. Malignaggi was fighting Orlando Lora. At about mid-way through the first round, three guys straight out of the Sopranos stood in the aisle next to me and started screaming: "Paulie, move ya head! Atta boy! Move Paulie, move! Now hit him Paulie! That's it Paulie!" The three New Yawk-accented *paesani* stood out because we were in Los Angeles, arguably the new Mecca of Boxing.

Look through 1950s-era ("the Golden Age of Boxing") issues of THE RING Magazine. Filling its pages were dispatches from assorted locales, a long column given to California ("In Sunny California") with less-emphasized news from the boxing burbs: "It Happened in Wisconsin"; "In And Around Philadelphia"; "Right from Mexico City"; "Report from the Philippines"; "Nebraska Boxing"; "In And Around Chicago." But plain on every page was the

▶ The emergence of the Wild Card Boxing Club as the premier gym in the United States is one example of how boxing is thriving in Los Angeles. Image: **Robert Gallagher**

assumption that all boxing roads lead to New York, the Ancient Rome of the sport.

New York has been forced to give up its mantle as the boxing capital because of many factors, including the gentrification of the city (immigrants have been pushed out of the boroughs), a comical state athletic commission (as shown in the licensing of Antonio Margarito before his rematch with Miguel Cotto), and the Mexican domination of the sport in this country, which makes Los Angeles a natural homebase. Nowadays most of the greatest modern fighters train in the Los Angeles area, there is a tremendous fan base in Southern California, it is the only city in which there is a major metropolitan newspaper (The Los Angeles Times) with a regular boxing writer, one of the major promotional companies (Golden Boy) is based here, and the largest (Top Rank), while headquartered in Las Vegas, has great influence in La La Land.

"New York hasn't been a hub of boxing for a long time," says Al Bernstein, the Hall of Fame boxing broadcaster. But he also contends that "geography has become irrelevant," especially in the age in which people get their news and views electronically. In a world that is "flat"—the notion that globalization has leveled the world's economic playing field—maybe boxing doesn't need a capital, and its ability to stay fluid and follow its fanbase could be seen as an advantage. For argument's sake, look at Hamburg, Germany. Boxing fans in Deutschland could argue that boxing is bigger there than in the Los Angeles Basin. World heavyweight champions Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko are based in Germany and hold many of their fights in sold-out 60,000-capacity soccer stadiums. As many as 16 million viewers watch their fights on network television. Tom Loeffler, the managing director of K2 Promotions, the Klitschko brothers' company, says the Klitschkos enjoy fighting in the United States (they both fought in the states earlier in their careers, and both men own homes in America), but the passionate German fanbase and lucrative European market means they are just as happy to stay away from the U.S. market, which also doesn't have a marketable fighter in the heavyweight division. Avoiding the United States, and especially New York, would have been considered a terrible career move a decade or so ago. But the loss of momentum in American boxing over the last 10 years has opened up the sport to other locales, not only on America's West Coast. For example, when the Klitschkos fight in Europe, they are covered in major daily newspapers. But if they were to land in the United

States for a fight, they would be mostly covered by passionate, yet niche, bloggers. The Klitschkos network television deal means they are more widely exposed, resulting in lucrative endorsement deals and popularity rivaling any other major sport.

Boxing isn't exactly dead in the United States, but it has seen better days, especially in its former epicenter. No one wants the New York to be an afterthought. There is a romance, a history, a stamp of approval when there is a big fight in the most influential city in the world, which has hosted some of the greatest events in the history of the sport.

New York's sizeable Puerto Rican community helped fill the rafters at last year's aforementioned Cotto-Margarito fight in the Garden (and there is a possibility that that fight could turn into a trilogy), and promoters are hoping to hold fights in the new Barclays

The Miguel Cotto-Antonio Margarito fight proved that Madison Square Garden remains one of the top venues in the world for boxing even if New York is no longer the hub of the sport. Image: **Getty Images**

Center in Brooklyn. And sure, Tomasz Adamek, the Polish boxer now based in Jersey City, can fill the Prudential Center in nearby Newark, N.J., the home of a sizeable Polish population. But there are no signs that New York will be making a major boxing comeback.

As for Malignaggi, he appreciates his New York fanbase ("I'm more of a New York fighter than an Italian fighter," he told me), but he trains in Los Angeles and feels like the center of boxing has moved west. As of late, Malignaggi has been training at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood. "Los Angeles. That's where the best come now. The Wild Card reminds me of what Gleason's was back in the day—the intensity, the grind, the champions. It's a poor man's sport and no one can afford New York anymore." When Malignaggi started going to Brooklyn's famous Gleason's Gym in the 1990s, he says it "felt good to hit a bag next to a world champion, to experience the great sparring, but now Gleason's is more of a white collar gym. I knew it had changed when I was training for a 12-round championship fight, but I had to wait to get into the ring because a white collar housewife had to finish her pad session. That's when I knew it was time to leave." ■

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IMAGE: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES

HEARNS LEADS 2012 CALL TO THE HALL

By: **Cliff Rold**

The "Fab Four" – Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Marvin Hagler and Thomas Hearns – will be forever linked in boxing lore. And soon all four will be together again in Canastota, N.Y.

Thomas Hearns was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame on Dec. 6 and will be inducted in June, making him the last of the great 1980s rivals to be so honored. Hagler was the first in 1993, followed by Leonard in 1997 and Duran in 2007.

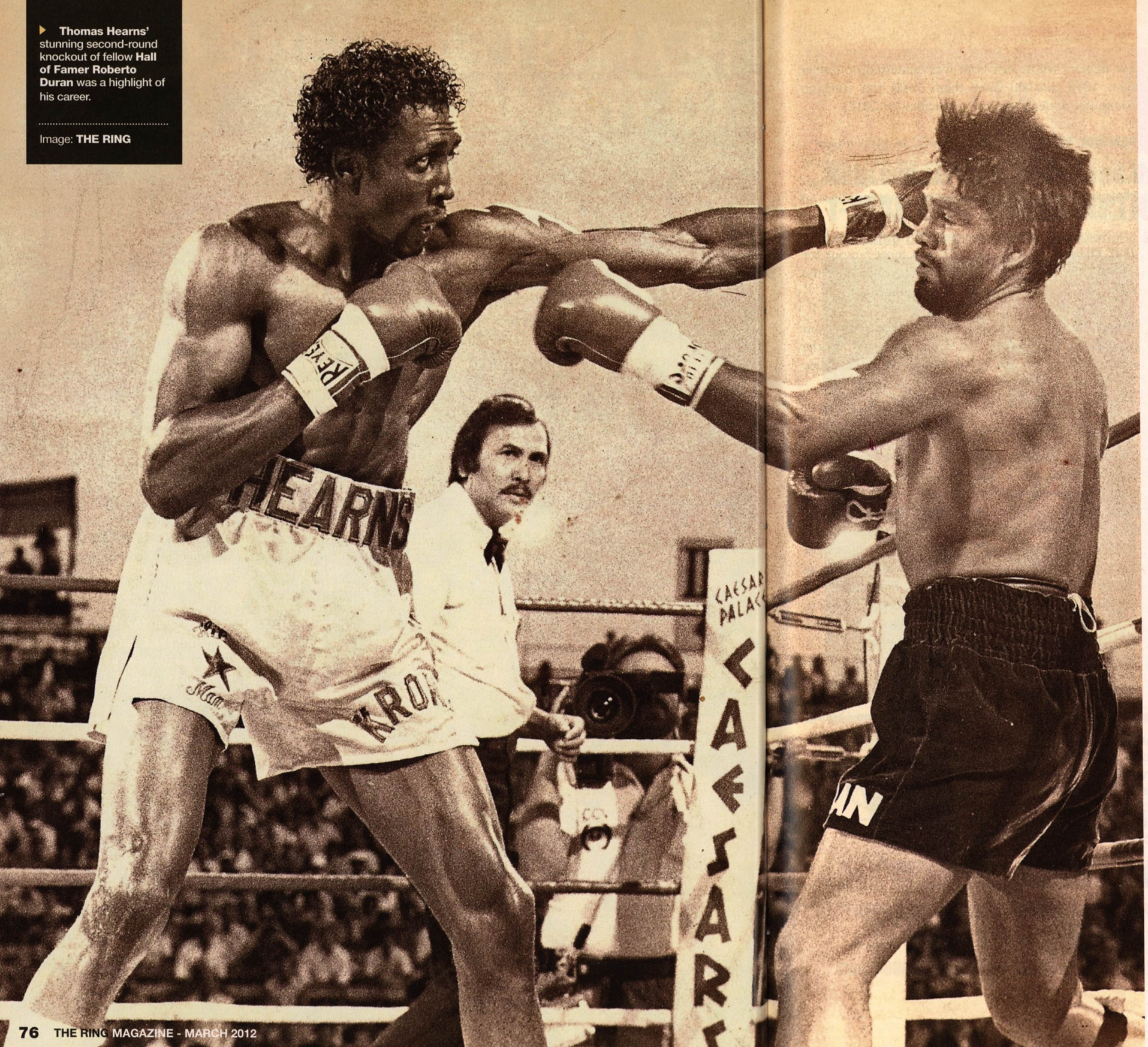
Though he is the last, Hearns might've been the most exciting of the foursome. Blessed with heavyweight height and reach, rare speed and one of the most-devastating right hands in history, The Hit Man fought with a thrilling, take-no-prisoners style that captivated a generation of boxing fans. His knockouts of Duran and Pipino Cuevas, among so many others, were breathtaking in their raw violence.

His style, in fact, sometimes obscures his many accomplishments. Hearns (61-5-1, 48 KO) went 1-2-1 against his rivals, but he was the first to win belts in four and five weight classes.

Trained out of the legendary Kronk Gym in Detroit, Hearns turned professional in 1977. Rising through the ranks, he bested future jr. welterweight champion Bruce Curry, former junior welterweight champion Saensak Muangsurin, former welterweight champion Angel Espada, and former junior middleweight titlist Eddie Gazo, all by knockout.

Hearns won his first title in 1980 with a second round blistering of Hall of Famer Pipino Cuevas, earning him THE RING's Fighter of the Year distinction. He would defend the WBA welterweight crown three times before losing it to WBC champion Sugar Ray Leonard in what would be THE RING's Fight of the Year for 1981.

Hearns bounced back to win the WBC crown at junior middleweight in 1982 with a decision over Hall of Fame three-division champion Wilfred Benitez. He would defend the



Thomas Hearns' stunning second-round knockout of fellow **Hall of Famer Roberto Duran** was a highlight of his career.

Image: **THE RING**

belt four times, most memorably in what would have been a unification bout had Roberto Duran not been stripped of the WBA crown for facing Hearns. Hearns, in turn, stripped him of his senses over two frames in 1984, for which he was named Fighter of the Year for the second time.

Hearns fell short in his first try at middleweight honors, stopped in three by Marvin Hagler in THE RING's 1985 Fight of the Year. Their epic first round was named Round of the Year as well. In 1987, he'd skip to light heavyweight and stop Dennis Andries in 10 for the WBC title. One fight later, he dropped back down and added his fourth divisional crown, stopping Juan Roldan for the vacant WBC middleweight belt.

Hearns was stopped in three rounds by Iran Barkley in his first middleweight defense, which was the 1988 RING Upset of the Year. Before year's end, however, Hearns rebounded to win the fledgling WBO's super middleweight crown in typically thrilling fashion, overcoming a dramatic fourth-round knockdown to earn a decision over James Kinchen. He beat Leonard to a fifth divisional crown by two days.

Seen as vulnerable, Hearns was matched with WBC titleholder Leonard for the first super middleweight unification bout in 1989. Hearns dropped Leonard twice and many believed he did enough to win but he was robbed of full satisfaction by a draw verdict. It was fair, at that point, to wonder whether Hearns had experienced his last hurrah.

He had one more surprise, though. In 1991, he was an underdog heading into a challenge of undefeated WBA light heavyweight champ Virgil Hill. Hill, a 1984 U.S. Olympic silver medalist at middleweight, had made 10 title defenses behind his "Quicksilver" jab. Hearns' jab, though, proved superior, and he bested Hill for a unanimous decision.

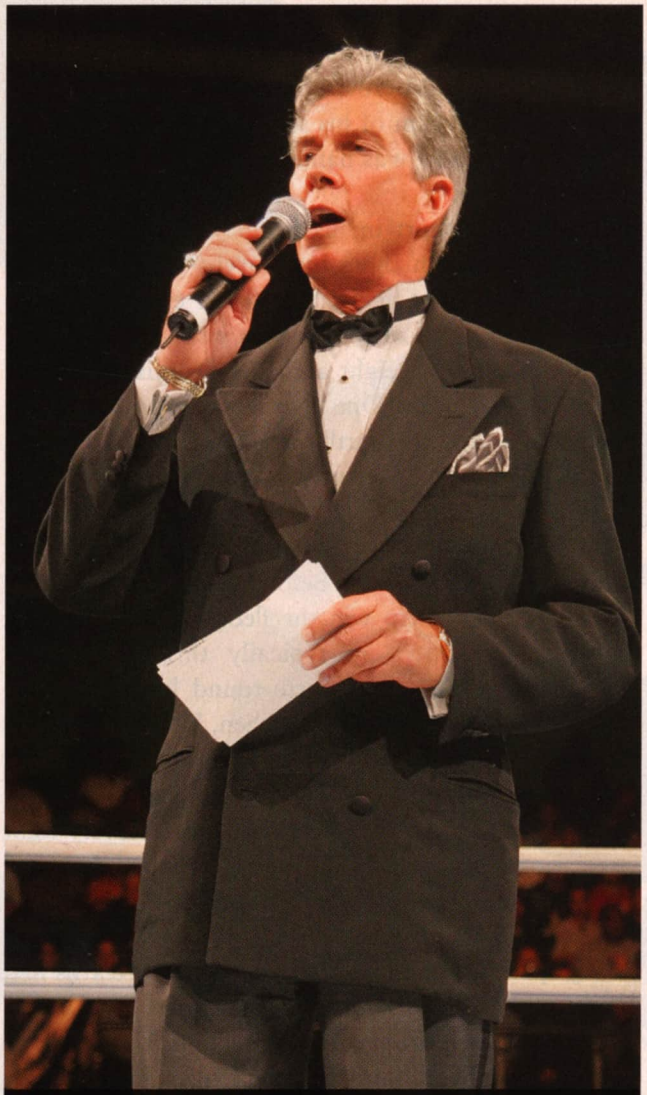
Barkley would prove to be his nemesis again in 1992, scoring a knockdown en route to a narrow split decision win in Hearns' first defense. It would be his final world title fight.

Twelve fights followed from 1993 to 2006, with only one loss. The highlight of his later years was a unanimous decision over former WBA Cruiserweight titlist Nate Miller in 1999, as Hearns approached his 41st birthday.

It is only by virtue of the fact that his last professional fight happened at age 47 that it took so long to vote him in, but now, in his first year of eligibility, Hearns finally takes his rightful place with the sport's immortals.

Hearns is joined in the Class of 2012 by another first-year-eligible battler and an unsung great of the past:

MARK JOHNSON: Pound-for-pound, the first African-American to win a flyweight crown may have been the



▶ Ring announcer **Michael Buffer** has become an icon in the sport in part because of his catchphrase, "Let's get ready to rumble!" Image: **Getty Images**

most feared and avoided fighter since a young Sonny Liston. Johnson (44-5, 28 KO) won the IBF 112-pound title in 1996, defending seven times before adding the IBF 115-pound belt in 1999. He lost the title due to a jail stint but returned for two sensational wars at bantamweight with Rafael Marquez, narrowly losing the first on points and being stopped in the rematch. Johnson would hand Fernando Montiel his first loss to win one more title, the WBO 115-pound belt, in 2003.

COCOA KID: Born in Puerto Rico, Cocoa Kid (176-56-10) was never a champion but he beat his share of them competing from featherweight to middleweight. He ended the career of Louis "Kid" Kaplan, beat Chalky Wright and Johnny Jaddick on points, and got the better of a years-long rivalry with Hall of Famer Holman Williams in a career spanning nearly two decades.

OLD-TIMERS INDUCTEES

For fighters whose last bout was contested no earlier than 1893 and no later than 1942, the selection committee added three new inductees for 2012:

NEWSBOY BROWN (57-13-5, 12 KO, 16 ND) fought a who's who of little men in his time and won a share of the flyweight title. Wins over Frankie Genaro, Midget Wolgast, Panama Al Brown, Baby Arizmendi and Chalky Wright make him an overdue addition.

JAKE KILRAIN (29-5-11, 17 KO) was most famous for a 76th-round stoppage loss to John L. Sullivan in the final bare knuckle heavyweight title fight.

LEO HOUCK (76-10-5, 21 KO, 112 ND) competed from flyweight to heavyweight but never won a world title, competing against the likes of Harry Greb, Gene Tunney, Jack Dillon and Mike Gibbons.

NON-PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Most famous for his work with Manny Pacquiao, trainer Freddie Roach was a scrappy fighter in his day and brings the same tenacity to his corner work. Mentored by the great Eddie Futch, Roach has overcome the daily trials of Parkinson's Syndrome to be a five-time BWAA Trainer of the Year. ... Michael Buffer made "Let's get ready to rumble" the signature of big-time boxing as his era's premiere ring announcer. ... From ESPN to Showtime, broadcaster Al Bernstein has given boxing decades of memorable calls from ringside. ... Michael Katz enters as one of the game's great wordsmiths, a biting and witty truth teller who covered the beat from the *New York Times* to the explosion of internet boxing coverage. ... Also inducted were promoters Hugh D. McIntosh and Rip Valenti. ... James Wharton (Young Molineaux) enters Canastota in the Pioneer Category.

The 23rd Annual Hall of Fame weekend is scheduled for June 7-10 in Canastota.

*Fighter records credited to **boxrec.com**

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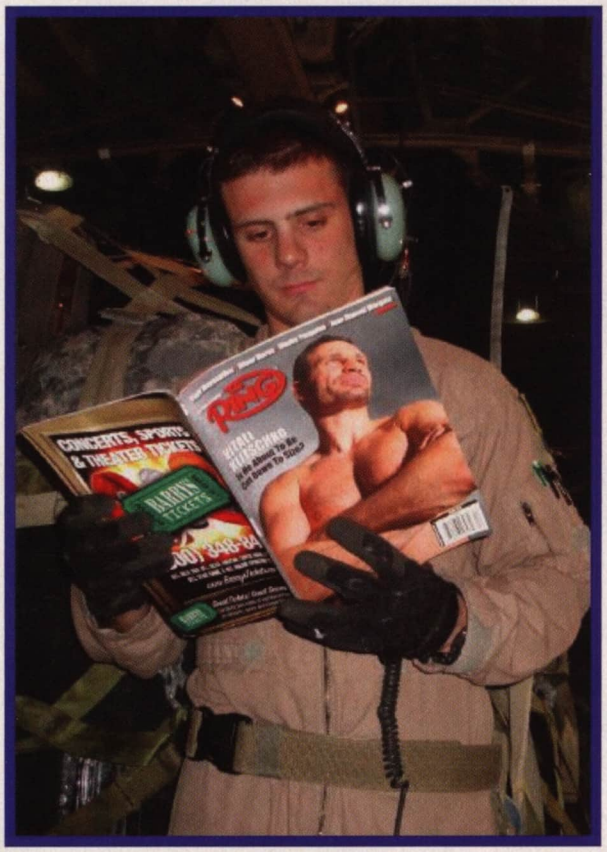

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IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

A-WARD WINNING

ANDRE WARD LEFT NO DOUBT THAT HE WAS **THE CLASS OF THE SUPER SIX WORLD BOXING CLASSIC BY DOMINATING CARL FROCH**

By: **Bernard Fernandez**

The ending was the beginning, and if that sounds like something from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, what else would you expect from a tournament winner whose eyebrow-raising nickname, "S.O.G.," stands for "Son of God."

"This is not the end. It's really the beginning for us," said Andre Ward, who wears his Christianity on his sleeve in much the same manner as Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow, after his unanimous decision win over England's Carl "The Cobra" Froch in the finale of the problem-plagued, yet highly satisfying Super Six World Boxing Classic. "We're going to get better. Believe it or not, you guys (media) haven't seen the best Andre Ward. I'm still growing. I'm still a young fighter. I've still got a long way to go.

"I'm looking forward to the next chapter in my life, the next chapter in my journey."

The question for the moment is whether that chapter will be written against IBF super middleweight champion Lucian Bute (30-0, 24 KOs), which would appear to be a natural pairing, or against an opponent of Ward's choosing, possibly a rematch with Denmark's Mikkel Kessler. Or he could have a go at a light heavyweight with name value, such as Bernard Hopkins, who was among the 5,626 in attendance for Ward-Froch in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall.

Ward (25-0, 13 KOs) apparently is inclined to look elsewhere until Bute, who declined to participate in the Super Six, "proves himself" against the kind of top-tier opposition that Ward had to wade through since his tournament first-rounder, an upset unanimous decision over the favored Kessler on Nov. 21, 2009, in Ward's hometown of Oakland, Calif. That victory enabled Ward to wrest the WBA 168-pound title from Kessler, and by beating Froch, he added the Briton's WBC belt as well as THE RING championship.

IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

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Now in possession of three bejeweled belts and the big, shiny Super Six trophy, Ward is the hunted instead of the hunter, and he is determined to employ his newfound clout to his advantage. It is Ward's assertion that Bute, the Montreal-based Romanian southpaw, hasn't done nearly as much heavy lifting as he and Froch (28-2, 20 KOs) did en route to the Super Six wrap party on Dec. 17. For Bute now to have first dibs on the event's survivor – and for equal or near-equal money – just doesn't seem fair to Ward.

"He's been sitting back, waiting, while we've been fighting for the past 2½ years against top competition," Ward said at the post-fight press conference when asked yet again about Bute. "I don't have to go to Lucian Bute.

"We're (promoter Dan Goossen, manager James Prince and trainer Virgil Hunter) going to sit back and see what makes sense. I think I've earned the right to pick the right fight."

To Ward's way of thinking, Bute – who has successfully defended his IBF title six times since the Super Six kicked off – should prove his worthiness against an "A-level" guy, possibly Froch. Sitting at the same postfight dais with Ward, Froch, his face lumpier than day-old oatmeal, said he would gladly agree to mix it up with Bute, whom he also views with some disdain, and for the same reasons espoused by Ward.

"You can't sit back and take your time when everybody else is working hard," Ward reiterated. "It don't work like that."

Well, sometimes it does. Remember, Michael Spinks turned down a $5 million payday to fight Mike Tyson in a heavyweight tournament whose purpose was to crown an undisputed champion in the mid-1980s. By holding out, Spinks wound up with a $13.2 million payday for fighting Tyson in 1988. Had they scrapped earlier, Spinks might have been on the wrong end of the same result – he was blown away in 91 seconds – but his much-larger purse more than compensated for any pain and suffering incurred.

The Bute factor was but one of several problems that then-Showtime president Ken Hershman faced when he tried to bring six fighters from five countries together in the boxing equivalent of a harmonious session of the United Nations Security Council.

Three of the original six Super Six entrants – Kessler, Jermain Taylor and Andre Dirrell – dropped out at some point, with Allan Green and old reliable Glen Johnson filling two of the vacancies. That made for a situation in which Johnson had to fight and win only once to reach the semifinals, where he dropped a 12-round majority decision to Froch in Boardwalk Hall on June 24.

Despite all the drawbacks, however, the Super Six was as satisfying to fight fans as it was ambitious in scope. The bouts that took place were routinely competitive and interesting, as might be expected when two quality fighters actually deign to test themselves against one another. And there were surprises, with the two European veterans who were expected to rise, like cream, to the top – Kessler and German-based Armenian Arthur Abraham – failing to reach the final.

Andre Ward's (left) virtuoso performance against **Carl Froch** capped an impressive run to the Super Six World Boxing Classic championship and earned him THE RING super middleweight belt. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Ward, who won the only American gold medal in boxing at the 2004 Athens Olympics, was considered a bit of a long shot when the Super Six began, but he emerged as its breakout star, beginning with his relatively easy decision nod over Kessler (by margins of four, six and six points) and continuing with paint jobs against Green (a shutout on all three cards) and Abraham (12, eight and seven rounds won). He also took an out-of-tournament, keep-busy fight with Sakio Bika in which he again won every round on all three judges' scorecards.

The result was similar against Froch, a very capable fighter who appeared to be moving in molasses against the quicker Ward. One judge – the British one, John Keane – had "S.O.G." running away with it at 118-110, although Canada's Craig Metcalfe and the United States' John Stewart saw it much closer with identical scores of 115-113.

Prince, the rap mogul who is a key member of Team Ward, derided Metcalfe and Stewart as "kin to

Carl Froch (right) proved to be resilient but couldn't match the skills of **Andre Ward** in the championship match of the Super Six World Boxing Classic. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Stevie Wonder."

Certainly punch statistics furnished by CompuBox indicated a level of dominance for Ward, who landed 243 of 573 punches (a very good 42 percent) to just 156 of 683 (23 percent) for Froch. And Ward was consistent, landing at the same 42 percent clip on jabs (107 of 252) and power shots (136 of 321).

"I was in against a very slick, very awkward, very good fighter," Froch conceded. "I take nothing away from Andre Ward. He's very good at not getting hit, very good at keeping himself out of harm's way. He's like a slippery eel at times."

Of the pair of 115-113 scores, Froch said, "The further the fight went on, I was getting into it. I was winning the late rounds. I know it's not 15 rounds ... but certainly I'm a 15-round fighter. To make up for that, what I need to do is start faster and stronger. He was breathing heavy in rounds 10 and 11. He would have been breathing heavy in rounds six, seven and eight instead.

"I think I'm the closest to come to him on the scorecards. Two of the cards were very, very close. Whether he agrees with that, I don't know. All I'm saying is that I'm the man who came closest to defeating Andre Ward."

Ward is now very much in the conversation for recognition as one of boxing's pound-for-pound best, and maybe his handling of Froch makes him the frontrunner for 2011 Fighter of the Year honors from THE RING and the Boxing Writers Association of America. As the man said, the journey continues.

Hershman was scheduled to take over as the new president of HBO Sports on Jan. 9, which means he has a much bigger budget to play with, so maybe more Super Six-type tournaments are in the offing, albeit with a bit of tweaking. Perhaps Hershman's successor at Showtime, Stephen Espinoza, will pick another division for another "grand experiment."

Whether Ward or Bute deserves to be king of the super middleweight mountain, the Super Six at least proved that boxing, for all its self-inflicted wounds, sometimes can and does get it right. ■

IMPRESSIVE

For an idea of what Andre Ward was up against and what he accomplished in the Super Six World Boxing Classic, consider these figures:

131-5 – The combined record of his four opponents (Mikkel Kessler, Allan Green, Arthur Abraham and Carl Froch).

4-0 – Record in the tournament (four decisions, including an 11th-round technical decision over Kessler).

114-23-1 – Rounds won vs. lost in the tournament. (One judge scored a 10-10 round in the Abraham fight.)

4 – Number of judges who had him shutting out his opponent (three against Green and one against Abraham).

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO READ MORE ABOUT ANDRE WARD AT RINGTV.COM.

STILL STANDING

MIGUEL COTTO PROBABLY IS BEYOND HIS PEAK BUT HE PROVED IN A CONVINCING VICTORY OVER RIVAL ANTONIO MARGARITO THAT HE IS FAR FROM FINISHED

By: **Mike Coppinger**

NEW YORK – Miguel Cotto slowly made his way through the crowded ring to the enemy corner. He stood there for a long time, staring through the swirl of cornermen and doctors at the swollen face of his bitter rival.

"I did that so I could enjoy the taste of my victory," said Cotto.

It was an uncharacteristic display of indulgence, but the 31-year-old Cotto, deemed by many a faded fighter heading into his high-profile revenge match with Antonio Margarito, had a lot of reasons to savor the moment.

Many had predicted that the Dec. 4 fight would be another grueling battle, and that regardless of who won, both fighters ran the risk of emerging as husks of their former selves.

Cotto (37-2, 30 KOs), though, had no aspirations of following the script that night. He boxed beautifully from the opening bell all the way to the start of the 10th round, when the slow, resigned wave of referee Steve Smoger's hands signaled the end of the contest.

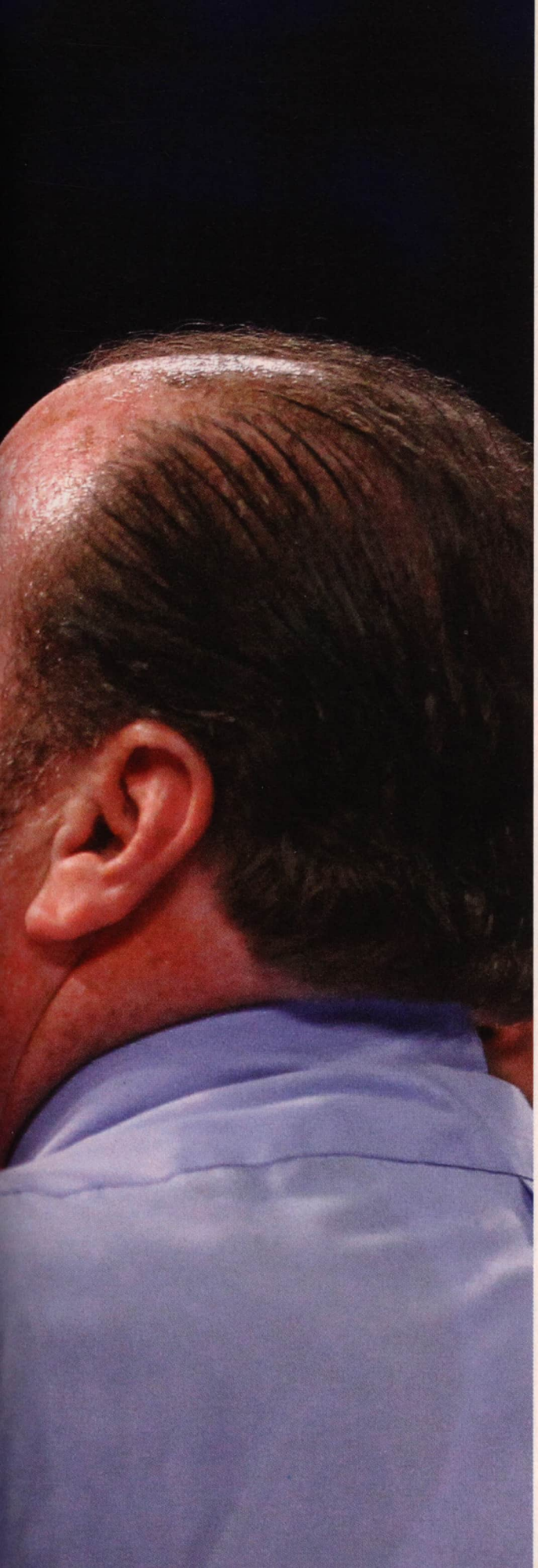
In his first fight under new trainer Pedro Diaz – after parting with the illustrious Emanuel Steward – Cotto used lateral movement to perplex the plodding Margarito (38-8, 27 KOs), easily landing three- and four-punch combinations before escaping harm's way. In their first encounter, on July 26, 2008, Cotto built an early lead before succumbing to Margarito's relentless pressure, often finding himself helplessly trapped against the ropes. More than three years later, Cotto made sure he and the ropes were utter strangers, residing and dictating the action in the center of the ring.

This bout, contested at a catch-weight of 153

IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

A beaten **Antonio Margarito** desperately wanted to continue fighting in spite of his badly swollen right eye.

Image: **Getty Images**



"I HAD NO VISION PROBLEMS, BUT I NEEDED A COUPLE MORE ROUNDS TO BEAT THIS GUY. THE PUNCHES DIDN'T HURT ME, THE SWELLING JUST GOT WORSE AND WORSE, THOUGH." – MARGARITO

pounds (six pounds north of their first meeting), saw Cotto targeting the surgically-repaired right eye of Margarito – an eye that had almost forced the fight out of New York. Eighty-six times Cotto's gloves landed there.

The Mexican warrior had his moments, though, fleeting as they were. Margarito's best success came when he bullied Cotto on the inside and ripped hard body shots. But this time around, Cotto never unraveled.

After the TKO verdict was announced, and amidst a shower of raucous cheers from the pro-Cotto 21,239 at Madison Square Garden, talk quickly turned to Puerto Rican's future.

Cotto has participated in some taxing wars over the years – waged most notably against Zab Judah, Joshua Clottey, Manny Pacquiao and now twice against Margarito – yet THE RING's No. 1 junior middleweight remains firmly in the mix for big fights in 2012. This in itself is a sort of upset.

"I'm still standing," said Cotto. "I'm just glad this is all over. I got this behind me."

The Margarito bout was his last under contract with Top Rank, and there has been talk of matching Cotto with undefeated middleweight Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. or even a money match with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Where Margarito goes from here is far less certain. The damage inflicted on his eye in his loss to Pacquiao is clearly a lingering problem. Some observers were aghast that he received a license at all.

However, smart money says he will fight on simply because he can.

"I had no vision problems, but I needed a couple more rounds to beat this guy. The punches didn't hurt me, the swelling just got worse and worse, though," Margarito said through his bilingual trainer Robert Garcia. "My eye was worse when I fought Pacquiao. I responded correctly to the doctor. I asked for at least one more round, but they wouldn't give it to me."

"I felt like this was a continuation of the first fight. He was holding, and I was landing the punches. I just wanted one more round."

Smoger, a man known for allowing fighters to tough it out through injuries, disagreed with Margarito.

"The eye was completely shut," said Smoger. "We

IMAGE: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

were vacillating a little bit. The corner begged for another round. Dr. (Barry) Jordan said the eye was completely shut and we couldn't go on. I concurred with Dr. Jordan."

An attractive bout for the "Tijuana Tornado" could be another rematch, this time with another fighter widely perceived as faded – Paul Williams.

Their 2007 welterweight bout was highly entertaining, and a rematch at 154 figures to be the same. A matchup with Top Rank stablemate Chavez Jr. or a rematch with Joshua Clottey are also options.

Margarito's best days are clearly behind him, though. He is now 1-3 (0-3 against elite opponents) since he was caught with illegal pads in his wraps before he fought Shane Mosley.

Cotto, too, probably is beyond his peak. He won't go quietly, though; he continues to win important fights. ■

Miguel Cotto (left) used his boxing skills to avoid many of **Antonio Margarito's** punches.

Image: **Getty Images**

BY DR. MARGARET GOODMAN

DERELICTION OF DUTY

NEW YORK COMMISSION FAILED MISERABLY WHEN IT LICENSED MARGARITO

The ring doctor ultimately decided that Antonio Margarito couldn't continue fighting Miguel Cotto because of his injured right eye. Shouldn't the New York State Athletic Commission have made that decision before Margarito stepped into the ring? Image: **Chris Farina / Top Rank**

George Foreman's remarkable comeback after a 10-year hiatus from boxing is one of the sport's greatest success stories. It also might have been the worst thing to happen to other relatively old fighters.

Aging fighters often use Foreman's victory over Michael Moorer at 45 years old, by which he regained the heavyweight championship two decades after losing it to Muhammad Ali, as an example of what they believe they, too, can accomplish at middle age.

The problem is that they rarely consider the increased risk they take every time they step through the ropes, as one look at Ali today illustrates.

Those who want to fight into their 40s have a right to pursue their boxing licenses but it is the job of the boxing commissions to determine with diligence whether they would be in undue danger in the ring.

Even in Foreman's case, there was concern on the part of the sanctioning bodies and Nevada State Athletic Commission when he sought his license to fight Moorer, almost 20 years his junior.

Foreman underwent extensive testing, including multiple brain scans. At the time, I was the neurological consultant for the commission. His exams resembled those of a 20 year old. Perhaps it was genetic or his hiatus from the ring that spared him the wear and tear experienced by gym rats who spar regularly.

Clearly, Foreman was an anomaly. Yet countless other older fighters followed his lead, which continues to pose a significant challenge to those charged with protecting these athletes.

In evaluating an aging fighter's career, we often forget the damage incurred in the amateurs. Most boxers begin their careers in their early teens or younger and despite head gear plus shorter and fewer rounds, studies show amateur fighters face substantial danger.

A Swedish study that appeared in the September 2007 issue of the Archives of Neurology focused on 14 amateur boxers. The results revealed damage to neurons and other cells important to brain function within 7-10 days and as long as 3 months after a bout (despite rest from sparring). However, clinically, the fighters had normal examinations.

One can only imagine what these results would be like in professional fighters who might spar 100 rounds or more before a bout.

In a boxer, regardless of ability, the inevitable aging process is superficially evident by an increased susceptibility to cuts and facial swelling. Reflexes are slowed, so it becomes more difficult to avoid a punch. And it becomes more difficult to recover after taking a solid punch or punches.

Boxing experts pay close attention to a fighter's legs; many believe they're the first thing to go as a fighter ages. This might apply less to heavyweights, who remain more stable during a bout than lighter-weight boxers who rely on activity to get the job done.

There also is a certain amount of brain shrinkage with advancing age. In a boxer over 40, even normal brain cell loss can increase their susceptibility to brain hemorrhage.

Tiny veins, called "bridging veins," connect the brain to a leathery covering that surrounds it (dura). As the brain shifts from trauma, these veins are pulled or stretched. In an older, shrunken brain, the veins are more taut. With sufficient force, they are more likely to pull away and bleed along the brain's surface – the major cause of death in a boxer.

Furthermore, the punishment absorbed by a boxer's brain today might not become evident until years after retirement from the ring. This might be why former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson, for example, was able to function as Chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission for some time until his cognitive function rapidly deteriorated over a few years.

So what is to be done?

A license to box must be earned, like a driver's license. A fighter must demonstrate skill. If he has it, he can fight. If his skill has diminished substantially, he can't fight. Simple as that.

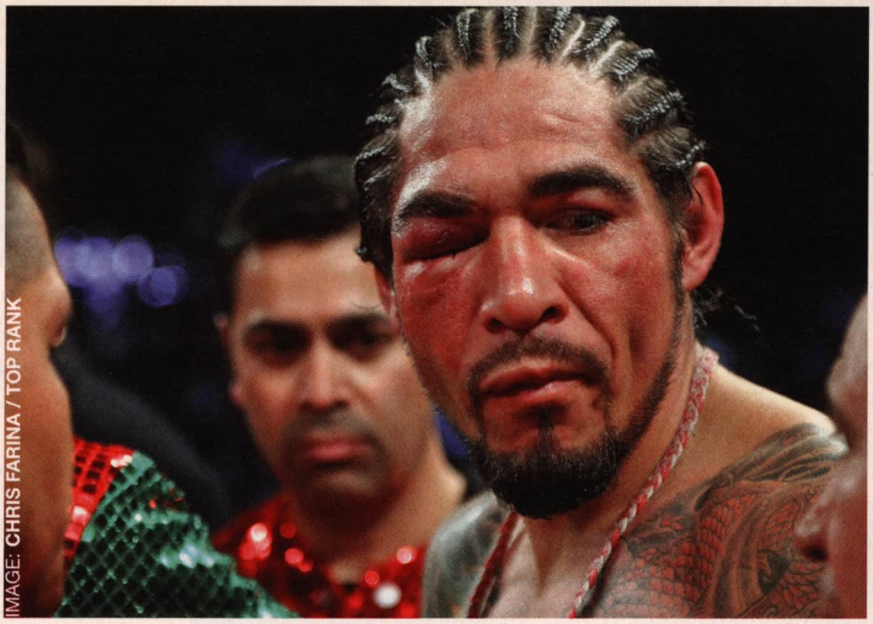


IMAGE: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

New York tried to suspend Evander Holyfield in 2004 following a dreadful loss to Larry Donald that revealed substantially diminished skills. The state rescinded the medical suspension when Holyfield passed medical evaluations, something he had done countless times before. Not only was the bar set too low; it was the wrong bar.

Medical tests performed on boxers can't replicate the stress on the body endured during a vigorous 12 rounds. And by the time exams indicate abnormality, such as cognitive testing that evaluates detailed brain functioning, it is often too late.

Still, athletic commissions try to hang their hat on these results to justify approving a bout. They want their decisions to hold up in a legal challenge. Chronological age cannot be used, but "ring age," the wear and tear on an athlete who has had too many tough matches, will count.

As a result of weakness, laziness, fear of reprisal from a promoter or loss of tax revenue, commissions frequently cave in or have their medical boards make such decisions. In the end, they often allow susceptible fighters to face weak opponents; they approve fewer rounds; or two aged boxers are licensed to compete against one another.

One hopes the boxer, or people around him, will help the athlete make the right decision. However, often it is difficult to recognize reality. For the fighter, pride typically interferes. And for the handlers who rely on fighters for their pay checks, an uncertain future can cloud their judgment.

The issue isn't whether once-great fighters like Holyfield (49) or Roy Jones Jr. (42) are able to win a fight here or there. That doesn't prove either way whether they should hold licenses. The important criterion is how far their skill levels have deteriorated from what they once were.

That's a determination boxing commissions must make. It might not be fun or win many accolades, but it is absolutely necessary – regardless of how many tickets the fighters can still sell. ■

Dr. Margaret Goodman is a practicing neurologist in Las Vegas. She is a former Medical Advisory Board Chairman and Chief Ringside Physician for the Nevada State Athletic Commission

JERMELL CHARLO

By: **Mike Coppinger**

JERMELL CHARLO: THE ESSENTIALS

AGE:	21
WEIGHT CLASS:	JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
HEIGHT:	6-FEET
STANCE:	ORTHODOX
TRAINER:	RONNIE SHIELDS
NICKNAME:	IRON MAN
HOMETOWN:	HOUSTON
RECORD:	16-0 (7 KOS)

Jermell Charlo's most powerful source of motivation comes in a small package: His 2-year-old son, Eli.

"It's a dream for me to be able to sit at home, relax and chill and fall asleep with Eli next to me, laying on my chest. That's a dream."

The junior middleweight prospect from Houston, only 21, doesn't make enough money yet to have the boy and his mother live with him, but big paydays might on the horizon.

Charlo, who finished a short but solid amateur career at 56-8 with a bronze medal from the 2005 junior Olympics, is 16-0 (7 knockouts) since turning pro in 2007, his most recent performance a decisive victory over Francisco Santana, which had the added importance of being broadcast on ShoBox.

Veteran trainer Ronnie Shields has been the guiding force in the young fighter's corner, a pairing characterized by tremendous mutual respect. Charlo compares their relationship to that of a father and son.

"I would wear long sleeves, because I didn't want Ronnie to see my tattoos," said Charlo, who has an identical twin brother named Jermall, an 8-0 welterweight. "I admire him a lot. I have a lot of respect for him. There are certain things I don't say and certain things I don't do because of Ronnie."

Shields, who has trained many great fighters over the years at the Savannah Boxing Club in Houston, thinks he has another special one in the "Iron Man."

"I think he's a great fighter," said Shields, who has trained Charlo since his pro debut at 17 years old. " He's a young kid, he's only 21 years old. He just has to mature to the next level, but he's on his way there. I think the next couple of fights you're going to see him so, so different. I think he's really starting to get it.

"He has the potential to be one of the best junior middleweights in the world."

Charlo credits his improved maturity to the birth of Eli.

"It's a journey and it shows me life," Charlo said of fatherhood. "There's always ups and downs. I've only fought two times (in 2011). I can't afford to take care of a kid and my girl right now. Once I get to a point in my career where I can take care of her and the baby, I will. I see my son every day, still."

Charlo was impressive against Santana, defeating him by a unanimous decision over eight rounds and in the process giving a superb display of his strengths: a strong jab, excellent lateral movement and hand speed.

Charlo has a fan in ShoBox analyst Steve Farhood.

"Charlo is a legitmate prospect who has to be moved slowly because of his age and because he turned pro so young," Farhood said. "He never really had the opportunity to fight the best amateurs at the highest level. If he's going to make it big time, he's going to have to improve his power. That's clearly what's missing.

"He's a nice boxer, but he has to commit more to his punches, and he has the time to learn it. I would call him one of the better young American prospects."

At 6 feet, Charlo is a big 154 pounder. He compares himself with another tall junior middleweight and reveals his confidence in the process.

"I think I'm a better, more-dominant fighter than Paul Williams," he said. "It just takes me being in control of the fight to get in there and throw the punches that I want. I have broken a lot of spirits. I have fought undefeated fighters. I have fought guys with one loss, guys with two losses. As a young fighter, I feel I have made my mark and already proven myself. After this last fight, I heard 'He doesn't have the power.' Actually, I do have the power.

"Fighting on ShoBox was just the beginning step to me. I feel like things will get bigger. It gave me an opportunity to get my name out there. It gave me an

Trainer **Ronnie Shields** believes **Jermell Charlo** has the potential to become one of the best junior middleweights in the world. Image: **Tom Hogan / Hoganphotos**

opportunity to show what I have."

Charlo probably will have many more such opportunities.

THREE MORE TO WATCH

EDDIE GOMEZ

Gomez (7-0, 6 KOs) is a hard-punching junior middleweight from Bronx, N.Y. Four of his six stoppages have come in the opening stanza. The 19-year-old Boricua, promoted by Golden Boy, is blessed with great hand speed and should be making noise at 154 in the years to come.

J'LEON LOVE

Love (9-0, 6 KOs) is a sturdy middleweight climbing his way through the ranks. Though the 24-year-old has faced weak opposition thus far, he has flourished. Promoted by Lou DiBella, the Dearborn, Mich.-based fighter is a flashy combination puncher with good size at 160.

JOSE PEDRAZA

A decorated amateur, Jose Pedraza (6-0, 5 KOs) represented Puerto Rico at the 2008 Olympic Games. At around 5'9", the lanky San Juan, Puerto Rico native has blinding hand speed and is ambidextrous to boot, able to switch stances at will. Promoted by Javier Bustillo, Gary Shaw and Lou DiBella, the 22-year-old lightweight has already been afforded the honor of fighting in New York City on the eve of the Puerto Rican Day Parade. ■

COMPILED BY **MIKE COPPINGER**

Abner Mares (left) was both resilient and skillful in his one-sided victory over **Joseph Agbeko** in their rematch.
Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

ABNER MARES UD 12 JOSEPH AGBEKO

DATE: DEC. 3, 2011
LOCATION: ANAHEIM, CALIF.
DIVISION: BANTAMWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: MARES 117¼; AGBEKO 117¼
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): MARES NO. 3; AGBEKO NO. 4
NETWORK: SHOWTIME

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- When Abner Mares and Joseph Agbeko renewed their acquaintance at the Honda Center, more was at stake than just the IBF 118-pound title Mares claimed in their first clash this past August.

Mares (23-0-1, 13 KOs,) won the first meeting by a unanimous decision but the ineptness of referee Russell Mora, who failed to penalize Mares for numerous low blows, cost the Guadalajara-born fighter a clean win.

Mares left no doubt in the minds of the boxing public this time, widely outpointing the New York-based Ghanaian—albeit in decidedly less dramatic fashion than in their first bout.

All three judges were in consensus on the final tally, as Jonathan Davis, Glen Hamada and Steve Morrow, all of the United States, scored the bout 118-110 in favor of Mares. THE RING had the same score.

Mares blended excellent boxing skills with effective aggression to win the majority of rounds, in spite of suffering a deep cut about his right eye in the second round, courtesy of an Agbeko jab.

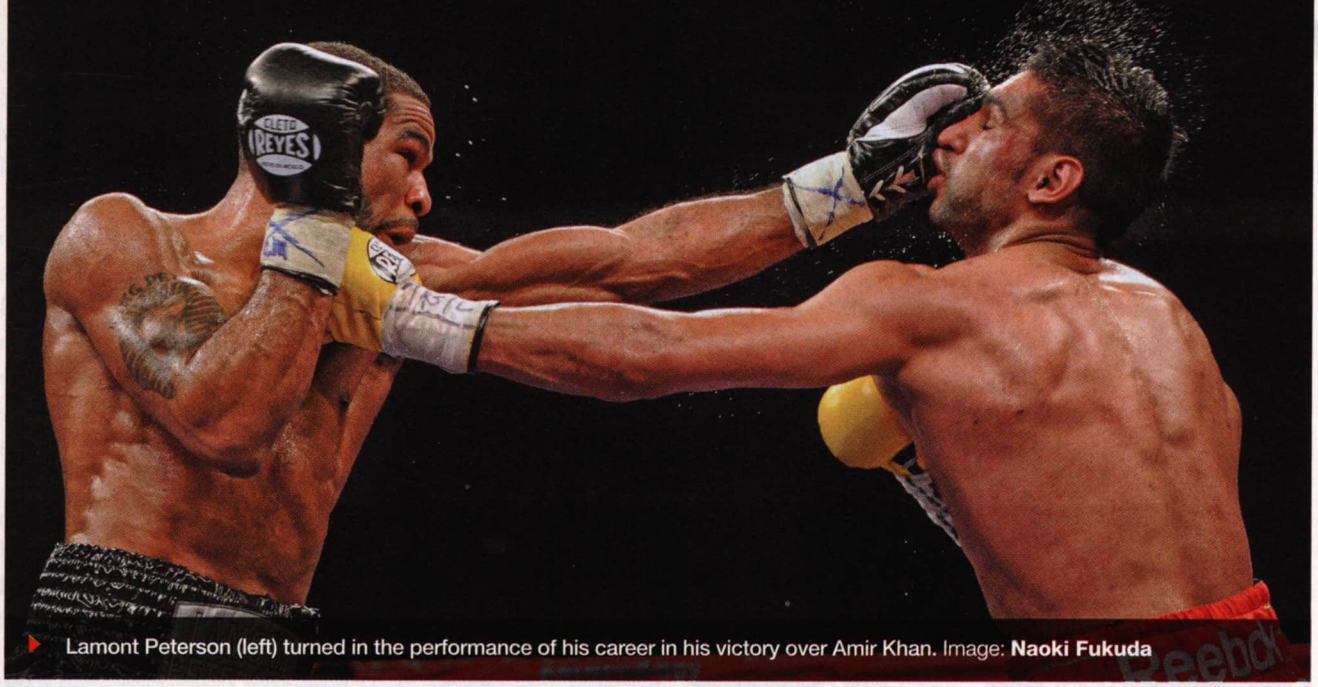
"(The cut) bothered me sometimes and (Agbeko) played it smart by going for it, but I had a great cutman in Miguel Diaz, and I knew I was winning the entire fight," boasted Mares in reference to the early scare.

Agbeko made adjustments in the first fight that allowed him to come on strong in the later rounds. This time he was unable to solve Mares' tactics, often missing wildly with looping shots from the outside. On the inside, Agbeko seemed content with waiting for Mares to conclude an attack before launching one of his own, but often found himself whiffing at air as Mares effortlessly landed or deflected punches.

American referee Lou Moret had to interject himself very little, warning both fighters only a handful of times.

With the victory, Mares can look to bigger fights in the loaded 118-pound weight class. Agbeko's prospects have dimmed, which could prompt a move up in weight to 122 pounds.

Mark Ortega



Lamont Peterson (left) turned in the performance of his career in his victory over Amir Khan. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

LAMONT PETERSON SD 12 AMIR KHAN

DATE: DEC. 10, 2011
LOCATION: WASHINGTON, D.C.
DIVISION: JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: KHAN 139; PETERSON 140
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): KHAN NO. 1; PETERSON NO. 6
NETWORK: HBO

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Amir Khan was a prohibitive favorite over local fighter Lamont Peterson, but that was nothing new for the one-time homeless person who has faced long odds his entire life.

Peterson twice stepped up in competition – against Tim Bradley and Victor Ortiz – and both times couldn't find a way to win. This time he broke through, defeating Khan by a split decision to win the WBA and IBF titles with toughness and determination more than boxing skill.

Judges George Hill and Valerie Dorsett of the U.S. scored it 113-112 for Peterson, while Nelson Vazquez of Puerto Rico saw it for Khan 115-110. THE RING correspondent at ringside also had it 113-112 for Peterson.

Peterson (30-1-1, 15 knockouts) was dropped in the first round (though it appeared to be a slip) and had a shaky second round but started to come on in the third, winning the round on all three cards with the strength of his effective aggression and body punching.

The D.C. native put his head down and rushed forward the entire bout, cutting off the ring and putting Khan (26-2, 18 KOs) in precarious situations. When he had Khan against the ropes, he teed off with jarring left hooks to the body and mixed in accurate right uppercuts for good measure.

Rounds seven and eight were particularly big frames for Peterson, who had the titleholder on his bicycle and reeling from the onslaught. Khan boxed going backward against the charging Peterson and landed inconsistently, while referee Joseph Cooper – from Washington D.C. – deducted a point from Khan for pushing in the seventh, making Khan's mission even more difficult.

The 25-year-old from Bolton, England, tried to turn the tide in the ninth by electing to exchange punches in the middle of the ring, jumping in and out with fast combinations. Over the last few rounds, the fighters were clearly exhausted from their taxing brawl. Peterson's right eye was badly swollen and Khan's legs showed the toll taken by the body punches.

D.C.'s first title bout in almost 20 years was a treat for the near sell-out crowd of 8,647 at the Walter E. Convention Center. The atmosphere was electric, with many Britons who made the trip from across the pond and the vocal D.C. fans pushing their respective fighters on. A rematch is likely to take place given how exciting the bout was; it was a sure-fire candidate for Fight of the Year.

"I was up against two people in there. He was coming in with his head lower and lower," said Khan of the point deductions. "I had to push him away, trying to stay away from his head. He was being effective at pressuring, but I was the cleaner fighter all night. I'm ready for a rematch. I'm here, I'll take it."

For Peterson, it was another chapter in his unlikely story.

"A lot of people look to me as the underdog, they didn't give me a chance to win," he said. "It's a 12-round fight, not a three-round fight. I didn't get worried when I was knocked down in the first. ... He gave me a shot at the title, so I will give him a rematch, no problem."

Mike Coppinger

Brian Viloria (left) dominated Giovani Segura en route to an eighth-round knockout in the Philippines. Image: **Dong Secuya**

BRIAN VILORIA TKO 8 GIOVANI SEGURA

DATE: DEC. 11, 2011
LOCATION: PASIG CITY, PHILIPPINES
DIVISION: FLYWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: VILORIA 112; SEGURA 112
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): VILORIA NO. 3 ; SEGURA P4P NO. 9
NETWORK: NONE

PASIG CITY, Philippines -- Despite being the incumbent titleholder, Brian Viloria found himself playing the all-too-familiar role of underdog against former RING junior flyweight champ Giovani Segura in the first defense of his WBO flyweight belt. On a night when people were expecting to write his career's epitaph, Viloria turned in perhaps his best performance to date, defeating Segura by TKO at 29 seconds of the eighth round at the Yñares Sports Arena.

American referee Samuel Viruet waved off the bout after the grotesque swelling on the right side of Segura's head (apparently caused by a burst blood vessel) had begun to impair his vision, leaving him defenseless. All three judges had Viloria ahead at the time of the stoppage, with Danrex Tapdasan of the Philippines scoring it 69-64, Harry Davis of Canada tallying 68-65 and Ulysses Glenn of the U.S. turning in a score of 70-63. THE RING had Viloria ahead 69-64.

Viloria (30-3, 17 KO), who had reigned twice as a beltholder at 108 pounds, is known primarily for his right hand punching power, but it was the left hook that befuddled 29-year-old Segura (28-2-1, 24 KO). Viloria repeatedly rocked the Los Angeles-area fighter from the second round on. Segura remained resolute, pushing forward and stealing moments with his body work and uppercuts in the fourth and fifth rounds, only to be answered by the counterpunching power of the 2000 U.S. Olympian from Hawaii.

By the sixth, Viloria's body-punching investment began to pay dividends as he crowded Segura along the ropes, bullying the supposedly stronger fighter who had risen to No. 9 on THE RING's pound for pound list following two knockouts of Ivan Calderon. The end came with Segura still on his feet after he was rocked by a left hook.

"It just wasn't my night," said Segura, who remained in the hospital days afterward as a precaution. "I believe I had more gas in the tank, but it had to be stopped because of the eye. I was losing the fight, I think he was doing very good, but I think I had a little more left to give."

"This is the sweetest victory," said Viloria, who redeemed himself after being written off following a TKO loss to Carlos Tamara in 2010. "More than the (Ulises) Solis fight, more than the (Julio Cesar) Miranda fight."

Viloria was elevated to No. 2 in THE RING flyweight ratings, while Segura dropped out of the pound-for-pound list.

Ryan Songalia

SAUL ALVAREZ TKO 5 KERMIT CINTRON

Saul "Canelo" Alvarez systematically broke down veteran Kermit Cintron en route to a fifth-round knockout victory Nov. 26 in Mexico City.

Cintron (33-5-1, 28 KOs) was coming off a victory over Antwone Smith, which temporarily stalled his apparent decline, but he was dominated by Alvarez from the onset. Alvarez committed to Cintron's midsection, doubling up the hook and then following up to the head. He did this repeatedly with much success, finally dropping Cintron into a heap near the end of the fourth round.

Cintron beat the count on very uneasy legs and made it out of the frame even though the 21-year-old battered him with overhand rights. In the fifth, referee Hector Afu stopped the bout, saving the 32-year-old from further punishment.

Alvarez (39-0-1, 29 KOs) now seems ready for the biggest fights at 154.

ADRIEN BRONER KO 3 VICENTE RODRIGUEZ

In what was every bit the mismatch the public envisioned, 22-year-old Adrien Broner dispatched of Vicente Rodriguez with ease to win the vacant junior lightweight title – his first major belt – on the Nov. 26 Alvarez-Cintron telecast.

Broner, fighting in his hometown of Cincinatti and on HBO for the first time, was patient in picking apart the Argentine. In the second round, Broner (22-0, 18 KOs) rested with his back against the ropes and was content to let the far-smaller Rodriguez (34-3-1, 19 KOs) flail away as he dodged and parried the shots.

In the third, Broner badly hurt the 26-year-old with a crushing uppercut and then delivered a barrage of punches punctuated with a devastating left hook that put Rodriguez down for the count of 10.

Broner is scheduled to defend his title against Eloy Perez on the Devon Alexander-Marcos Maidana undercard Feb. 25 in St. Louis.

GARY RUSSELL JR. KO 1 HERIBETO RUIZ

Quick-handed southpaw Gary Russell Jr. (19-0, 11 KOs) made the most of his exposure on HBO, dispensing of Heriberto Ruiz (47-12-2, 29 KOs) with a crushing right hook in just 2:12 on the Broner-Rodriguez card Nov. 26 in Cincinnati.

In a scary scene, Ruiz lay apparently unconscious on his back with his eyes wide open, but eventually recovered.

It was a strong statement by the 23-year-old featherweight from Capitol Heights, Md., whose power has been questioned in the past.

Considered by many to have the fastest hands in the sport, Russell is confident his speed will take him to great heights even if the spectacular knockouts don't always come.

"I think [my hand speed] will give any fighter problems," he said.

ANSELMO MORENO UD 12 VIC DARCHINYAN

Anselmo Moreno made his American debut an impressive one, comfortably outboxing veteran Vic Darchinyan to win a one-sided decision on the Mares-Agbeko card Dec. 3 in Anaheim, Calif..

Moreno (32-1-1, 11 KOs) used lateral movement and sound fundamentals to win by scores of 120-107, 117-110 and 116-111, retaining the WBA 118-pound strap.

The 26-year-old Panamanian was on cruise-control from the beginning, making his fellow southpaw look silly at times with his superb boxing ability. Moreno also showed toughness and grit, electing to stand in the middle of the ring and mix it up with Darchinyan (37-4-1, 27 KOs) over the later rounds.

With the win, Moreno becomes a key factor in the loaded bantamweight division, while Darchinyan is approaching gatekeeper status with his third loss against world class competition at 118.

BRANDON RIOS TKO 11 JOHN MURRAY

Brandon Rios lost his WBA lightweight title on the scales, but the fight went on as scheduled after Rios agreed to pay Murray $20,000 and submit to a same-day weigh-in.

Rios (29-0-1, 22 KOs) was weight-drained, yet fought aggressively and broke down Murray (31-2, 18 KOs), stopping the Manchester, England, fighter in the 11th round on the Cotto-Margarito card Dec. 3 in New York.

The early rounds were close, as Murray, who weighed in at 134¾, landed hard body shots and tried to stave off the Oxnard, Calif.-based fighter's ferocious attack.

Murray was docked a point in the seventh for low blows and wilted down the stretch, his nose seemingly broken and spouting blood. Referee Earl Brown saved Murray from further punishment at 2:06 of round 11.

Murray dropped to No. 8 in THE RING ratings with the loss. Rios, who only managed 135½ at the weigh-in, will remain at 135 for now, according to Robert Garcia, his trainer.

Mike Coppinger

MIKE JONES UD 12 SEBASTIAN LUJAN

Undefeated welterweight Mike Jones would improve his stock against the most formidable foe of his career to date on the Cotto-Margarito card Dec. 3 in New York.

Jones (26-0, 19 KOs) cruised to a wide points victory

over the rugged Sebastian Lujan (38-6-2, 24 KOs) but failed to please the masses, whose boo's cascaded freely throughout the newly-renovated Madison Square Garden.

Judges Waleska Roldan and Ron McNair scored it 119-108, while Don Ackerman scored it 118-109, all for the 28-year-old Philadelphia native. THE RING had it 119-108.

The rangy Jones kept the 32-year-old Argentine at bay with his telephone-pole jab. Lujan gave up six inches in height and simply couldn't close distance and gain ground on the inside, losing round after round with little action to show for it.

Jones hurt Lujan in the 11th but didn't go for the knockout, resulting in an uneventful finish to a ho-hum affair.

Delvin Rodriguez easily outpointed Pawel Wolak in their rematch on Dec. 3. Image: **Chris Farina / Top Rank**

DELVIN RODRIGUEZ UD 10 PAWEL WOLAK

Delvin Rodriguez and Pawel Wolak waged war this past summer in a junior middleweight thriller that ended in a majority draw. This time around, Rodriguez (26-5-3, 14 KOs) left no doubt, outboxing Wolak and landing crushing uppercuts en route to a wide points victory on the Cotto-Margarito card Dec. 3 in New York.

Judge Robin Taylor scored it 100-90, John McKaie scored it 98-91 and John Signorile had it 98-92.

"I knew I needed to close the show this time. I wasn't taking any chances. I don't know what kept him up," Rodriguez said.

Wolak (29-2-1, 19 KOs) rushed in frenetically, but the tall, rangy native of the Dominican Republic kept the Polish-born "Raging Bull" at the end of his jab.

Toward the end of the fight, Wolak, of Mount Arlington, N.J. was eating one hard punch after another but made it to the final bell.

Afterward, Wolak announced his retirement from the sport.

Mike Coppinger

ROBERT HELENIUS SD 12 DEREK CHISORA

Robert Helenius, touted for his size and power, was pegged as the next challenger in waiting for the Klitschkos. However, after the Finn's disputed decision over Dereck Chisora Dec. 3 in Helenius' native Helsinki, it might be wise to reserve judgment.

Judge Leszek Jankowiak (Poland) scored it for Chisora 115-113 but was overruled by Giuseppe Quartarone (Italy) and Manuel Oliver Palomo (Spain), who both scored it 115-113 for Helenius.

Chisora (15-2, 9 KOs) outworked the taller Helenius (17-0, 11 Kos) from the onset, establishing himself on the inside and out-landing his foe. There also was a great disparity in the power-punching department: Chisora outlanded Helenius 214-77 in power shots, according to computer stats.

Still, Helenius, who weighed in at 239½, received the hometown nod, much to the dismay of boxing pundits worldwide. Helenius blamed the poor performance on an injured right hand.

Chisora, 243, received a lucrative consolation prize for his efforts: a title opportunity against Vitali Klitschko on Feb. 18.

SETH MITCHELL TKO 2 TIMUR IBRAGIMOV

Former Michigan State linebacker Seth Mitchell (24-0-1, 18 KOs) made a statement in his HBO debut on the Khan-Peterson undercard Dec. 10 in Washington, D.C, becoming the first fighter to stop Timur Ibragimov.

Ibragimov, 221 pounds, was never in the fight, as he ate right hand after right hand from Mitchell, 240½.

The merciful end came at 2:48 of the second round when Mitchell, 29, finished off the 36-year-old with chopping overhand rights, which forced referee Malik Waleed (D.C.) to intervene and call a halt to the bout.

The crowd at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center went wild as the Mitchell's arm was raised. He is based in nearby Brandywine, Md.

Ibragimov (20-4-1, 16 KOs), of Tashkent, Uzbekistan, represented Mitchell's toughest test to date. Mitchell figures to fight often on HBO in 2012, as yet another heavyweight is groomed to challenge the brothers Klitschko. ■

Kell Brook of England knocked out Luis Galarza in five rounds in his U.S. debut.

Image: **Getty Images**

HEAVYWEIGHTS

ALEXANDER POVETKIN KO 8 CEDRIC BOSWELL
SETH MITCHELL KO 2 TIMUR IBRAGIMOV
ROBERT HELENIUS W 12 DERECK CHISORA
ONDREJ PALA W 12 DARNELL WILSON
DEONTAY WILDER KO 1 DAVID LONG
AMIR MANSOUR KO 6 EPIFANIO MENDOZA
FABIO MOLI W 10 SEBASTIAN CEBALLOS
LUIS ORTIZ TKO 2 FRANK MOLA
JASON ESTRADA W 8 JOSEPH RABOTTE

CRUISERWEIGHTS

KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK KO 11 DANNY GREEN
ROY JONES JR. W 10 MAX ALEXANDER
WILLIAM BEZERRA KO 6 JOSE AUGUSTO DOS SANTOS
ANDRES TAYLOR W 8 GARY GOMEZ

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

EDISON MIRANDA KO 5 KARIZ KARIUKI
DAWID KOSTECKI KO 4 BYRON MITCHELL
DOUDOU NGUMBU W 12 ALEKSY KUZIEMSKI
SERGEY KOVALEV KO 7 ROMAN SIMAKOV
ROBERTO BOLONTI KO 6 JOSE EMILIO MAZURIER
ANDRZEJ FONFARA KO 3 PHIL WILLIAMS
CORNELIUS WHITE W 6 YORDANIS DESPAIGNE

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

ANDRE WARD W 12 CARL FROCH
THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN KO 11 FRANCISCO SIERRA
ANTHONY DIRRELL KO 4 RENAN ST. JUSTE
SAKIO BIKA TECH. WIN 3 ALFREDO CONTRERAS
ADONIS STEVENSON KO 9 AARON PRYOR JR.
NIKOLA SJEKLOCA W 12 PETER MASHAMAITE
CHRISTOPHER REBRASSE W 10 HUGO KASPERSKI
JOSEPH KWADJO KO 2 ZULFIKAR JOY ALI

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

GENNADY GOLOVKIN KO 1 LAJUAN SIMON
FELIX STURM D 12 MARTIN MURRAY
JOACHIM ALCINE W 12 DAVID LEMIEUX
NOBUHIRO ISHIDA KO 1 EDSON ESPINOZA
MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO KO 5 MATT VANDA
FERNANDO GUERRERO KO 5 ROBERT KLIEWER
MAX BURSAK KO 3 LAATEKWEI HAMMOND
GILBERTO SANCHEZ KO 4 SAMUEL MILLER
MAKOTO FUCHIGAMI KO 9 KOJI SATO

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS

MIGUEL COTTO TKO 10 ANTONIO MARGARITO
SAUL ALVAREZ KO 5 KERMIT CINTRON
DELVIN RODRIGUEZ W 10 PAWEL WOLAK
JAVIER MACIEL KO 1 NESTOR FACCIO
BRIAN ROSE W 12 PRINCE ARRON

Brandon Rios broke down John Murray before stopping him in 11 rounds. Image: **Chris Farina / Top Rank**

WELTERWEIGHTS

KELL BROOK KO 5 LUIS GALARZA
SELCUK AYDIN W 12 IONUT DAN ION
MIKE JONES W 12 SEBASTIAN LUJAN
ANTONIN DECARIE W 12 VICTOR LUPO PUIU
ANNE SOPHIE MATHIS KO 7 HOLLY HOLM
KEVIN BIZIER W 12 LANARDO TYNER
ED PAREDES KO 2 ALEX HERNANDEZ
PABLO MUNGUIA KO 9 JUAN JESUS RIVERA
DIEGO GABRIEL CHAVES KO 3 JORGE DANIEL MIRANDA
SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASAK W 12 MOHAMMAD HAMSEE

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

LAMONT PETERSON W 12 AMIR KHAN
LUCAS MATTHYSSE KO 4 SERGIO OMAR PRIOTTI
ASHLEY THEOPHANE KO 11 BEN MURPHY
FRANKIE GOMEZ KO 3 JAMES HOPE
CARLOS MOLINA W 10 MANUEL LEYVA
RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV W 12 DEMARCUS CORLEY
ANTHONY PETERSON W 8 DANIEL ATTAH
ARMANDO ROBLES W 12 IVAN ALVAREZ
JOHAN PEREZ KO 4 FERNANDO CASTANEDA
FERNANDO ANGULO W 10 PATRICIO ANTONIO PEDRERO

LIGHTWEIGHTS

BRANDON RIOS KO 11 JOHN MURRAY
ALISHER RAHIMOV KO 7 SADDAM KIETYONGYUTH
ANTHONY CROLLA W 12 WILLIE LIMOND
ALEJANDRO SANABRIA KO 5 VINVIN RUFINO
DEJAN ZLATICANIN W 12 GODFREY NZIMANDE
DANIEL ESTRADA KO 3 CARLOS PARRA
ANTONIO ESCALANTE KO 7 RYNELL GRIFFIN
FERMIN DE LOS SANTOS KO 6 HELI QUIROZ
DARLEY PEREZ W 8 FERNANDO TREJO
GUILLAUME FRENOIS W 12 PATRICK KINIGAMAZI
AARON HERRERA W 10 ADALBERTO BORQUEZ

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

ADRIEN BRONER KO 3 VICENTE RODRIGUEZ
SIPHO TALIWE W 12 JASPER SEROKA
GARY RUSSELL JR KO 1 HERIBERTO RUIZ
TERDSAK KOKIETGYM KO 3 JOHN PINTOR
DANIEL RUIZ KO 2 RICARDO CASTILLO
MARTIN HONORIO W 12 FAHSAI SAKKREERIN
WILL TOMLINSON W 12 ALAN HERRERA
MAHONRI MONTES KO 4 JORGE PIMENTEL

FEATHERWEIGHTS

CHRIS JOHN W 12 STANYSLAV MERDOV
ORLANDO SALIDO KO 8 WENG HAYA
JHONNY GONZALEZ KO 2 ROINET CABALLERO
LEE SELBY KO 5 JOHN SIMPSON
AKIFUMI SHIMODA W 10 JONEL ALIBIO
JAVIER FORTUNA W 10 MIGUEL ROMAN
DAUD CINO YORDAN KO 4 FRANKIE ARCHULETA
MAUREEN SHEA W 10 DIANA AYALA
REY BAUTISTA KO 6 MIGUEL ANGEL MENDOZA
JOEL BRUNKER W 12 TI YAMAGATA AGUELO
HIROSHIGE OSAWA KO 8 NAOKI MATSUDA
SALVADOR SANCHEZ W 12 ALEXANDER MONTERROSA
ANDRES GUTIERREZ KO 7 FRANKLIN VARELA

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS

TOMOKI KAMEDA KO 7 EDUARDO GARCIA
CRISTIAN MIJARES KO 3 ALEJANDRO VALDEZ
JHONATAN ROMERO W 10 CHRIS AVALOS
HIDENORI OTAKE W 10 KENTARO MASUDA
ROBERT MARROQUIN W 10 CARLOS VALCARCEL

BANTAMWEIGHTS

ABNER MARES W 12 JOSEPH AGBEKO
ANSELMO MORENO W 12 VIC DARCHINYAN
KOKI KAMEDA KO 4 MARIO MACIAS
JORGE ARCE W 12 ANGKY ANGKOTA
ERIC MOREL W 10 JOSE SILVEIRA
ROLLY MATSUSHITA KO 11 KOHEI OBA
SYLVESTER LOPEZ KO 1 CHAPAYAK SITNARITS
PUNGLUANG SOR SINGYU TECH. DEC. 7 DANILO PENA
DAVID DE LA MORA KO 7 EDDY JULIO
RONALD BARRERA TECH. WIN 9 ARTURO BADILLO

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

TEPPARITH KOKIETGYM W 12 DAIKI KAMEDA
JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS W 12 ZOLANI TETE
LIBORIO SOLIS W 12 JOSE SALGADO
CARLOS CUADRAS KO 6 ALBERTO CHUC
RYO AKAHO KO 9 TOYOTO SHIRAISHI
OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI W 12 HYOBU NAKAGAMA

FLYWEIGHTS

BRIAN VILORIA KO 8 GIOVANI SEGURA
JULIO CESAR MIRANDA W 10 CECILIO SANTOS
DEN. KRATHINGDAENGGYM W 12 LIONEL MARK DURAN
PETCH SOR CHITPATTANA W 10 JESSIE TUYOR
CHRIS EDWARDS W 12 SHINNY BAYAAR
GLENN DONAIRE TECH. WIN 8 ALEX SANCHEZ

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

MASAYUKI KURODA W10 HAYATO YAMAGUCHI
ARMANDO TORRES KO 8 SAMMY GUTIERREZ
PEDRO GUEVARA TECH. WIN 5 MANUEL JIMENEZ
NAOMI TOGASHI W 10 CHO-RONG SON
TOSHIMASA OUCHI W 8 YUICHI HAMANAKA

STRAWWEIGHTS

RAUL GARCIA KO 6 ERIK RAMIREZ
KATIA GUTIERREZ KO 4 GRETCHEN ABANIEL
CARLOS BUITRAGO W 10 CARLOS MELO

Adrien Broner demonstrated some non-boxing moves after he knocked out **Vicente Rodriguez** in three rounds. Image: **Craig Bennett**

A CONVERSATION WITH ABC PRESIDENT TIM LUECKENHOFF

By: **Chuck Giampa**

Boxing fans often hear during a television broadcast or read that big fights are governed by the Unified Rules of the ABC.

However, not everyone is familiar with the Association of Boxing Commissions. With that in mind, THE RING contacted Tim Lueckenhoff, president of the ABC, to discuss his organization and issues facing the sport today.

Here is what he had to say:

RING: What is the origin of the ABC?

Tim Lueckenhoff: The ABC was formed over 25 year ago when a few of the states decided to get together to discuss common issues surrounding boxing. Some of the original members were Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Montana, Texas and Indiana.

RING: What are the goals of the ABC?

TL: To promote the standardized regulation of combative sports from licensing requirements, to bout approval, to event regulation, to medical suspension for injured contestants, to administrative suspensions, to those who violate the law.

RING: What states are members of the ABC?

TL: Wyoming and Alaska are the only states that are not members because they do not have athletic commissions. There is also no commission in Maine, but a private group has been given authority by the state to regulate MMA and they are now moving into boxing regulation. The ABC currently has 87 states, tribal, provincial and city commissions that are members in both the Unites States and Canada.

RING: What is the purpose of the Unified Rules of the ABC?

TL: The purpose of the ABC unified rules for boxing is to ensure that no matter where you go, the same rules will be applied. There is sometimes confusion regarding what the rules are, but the unified rules are only 13 specific rules that our member commissions have agreed upon to be used. The unified rules do not cover such things as weight classes, medical requirements, drug testing, requirements for hand wraps, etc. The unified rules for boxing denote the number of rounds for a championship fight, no three-knockdown rules. The referee is the sole arbiter when accidental and intentional fouls occur.

RING: The Unified Rules state that only a referee can stop a fight after consulting with the ringside physician. Some states allow the referee or doctor to stop fights independently due to an injury. What is your feeling on this?

TL: Certainly the trend is to allow the doctor input when stopping a fight. I do not have a concern with this as long as the referee and doctor are properly trained in assessing injuries surrounding boxers. All referees know, or should know they must take the advice of a physician when it is their opinion to stop a fight.

RING: What is your opinion of open scoring?

TL: The committee studied open scoring for an entire year gathering information from promoters, contestants and sanctioning organizations. After a presentation was made to the entire membership of the ABC, open scoring was rejected by member commissions, and member commissions were directed to not allow such during championship fights in the United States and Canada.

RING: In the U.S., do the referees and judges have to be certified by the ABC in order to do title fights? Or is this the decision of each individual state?

TL: No, they do not, but some commissions have made it a requirement that officials prove they have successfully completed continuing education. One of the main forums I ran on when first being elected as President of the ABC is that the ABC should be leader in training officials, and the ABC should dictate to officials how they wanted a fight scored or refereed. Shortly after becoming President, I asked three judges and three referees each from the West, Midwest and East to come to

Kansas City and develop a training seminar for boxing officials. Most of that information developed at the meeting is still in use today with many tweaks occurring along the way. But the bottom line is that we got officials interested in training and we continued to teach officials in the same method, which I think has improved scoring of those officials who have taken advantage of the training.

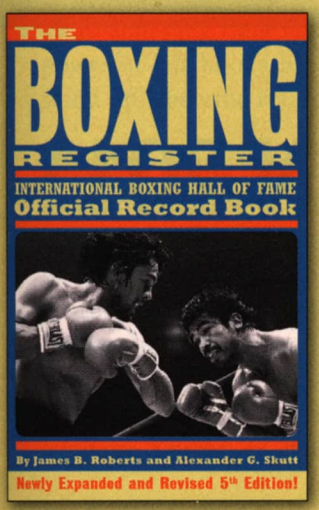
RING: The certification seminars for referees and judges strive for consistent scoring and consistent referee technique. Is there anything the ABC can do to make judges and referees more accountable?

TL: This really starts with our member commissions. Our member commissions must require mandatory training and that each official is hearing the same message. With technology today it is easier to track consistency of an official. Those officials who are consistently off when scoring must be moved back down to regain their concentration skills. Referees should be handled in the same manner. If their skills are diminishing, they must be scaled back until they improve. Nobody wants to be told they are doing something wrong, but for the good of boxing those decisions have to be made.

RING: Antonio Margarito recently had eye surgery and then fought. Is there a rule in the ABC pertaining to licensing after surgery or age?

TL: This is really a commission by commission issue. If a commission places a boxer on the national suspension list for a medical issue, then all commissions follow that suspension. During the recent Margarito situation, several commissions were monitoring the medicals with their commission-appointed doctors just in case the fight was not allowed in New York. Doctors all across this nation are capable of determining if Margarito was medically cleared to fight. If a physician is willing to put their seal of approval on a fighter and that a medical procedure has fixed the problem, who are we as commissioners to say they cannot fight? We are not experts in medical issues. ■

Chuck Giampa can be reached at **chuckgiampa@aol.com**



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Mariana "Barbie" Juarez of Mexico is THE RING women's Fighter of the Year for 2011. Image: **Getty Images**

WOMEN'S YEAR-END AWARDS

THE BEST OF THE BEST IN 2011

By **David A. Avila**

Several major encounters between top female fighters led to a very exciting year for women's boxing around the world.

A number of elite fighters traveled to other countries to test their mettle against the best in their weight classes, while many others left their home towns to seek fame, if not fortune, beyond their comfort zones.

Mexico City's Mariana Juarez was one of the busiest world champions in 2011. After waiting six years to get another title shot, she won the WBC flyweight title in March and successfully defended it four times in a nine-month span.

Several others had eye-popping performances, especially in the lower weight divisions. Overall, 2011 could be a watershed year for women's professional boxing.

Here are the best of 2011:

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Mariana "Barbie" Juarez (31-5-3, 15 KOs) beat out the competition by a narrow margin. Up until December, Juarez was the clear choice for Fighter of the Year after waiting six years to get another world title shot, which finally came on March 11, 2011 when she fought and beat reigning WBC flyweight champion Simona Galassi (16-1-1, 3 KOs) of Italy. Juarez is a former junior bantamweight champion who lost her title six

years ago in South Korea when the referee suddenly stopped the fight in mid-action and awarded the South Korean the victory and the belt. After a short absence due to pregnancy, Juarez returned and dropped to the flyweight division where she has dominated. She is Mexico's most popular female fighter and headlines every fight card she's on, even when all the other bouts are between men. France's Anne Sophie Mathis was a very close second for this award.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Ana Maria Torres (27-3-3, 15 KOs) vs. Jackie Nava (25-4-3, 11 KOs) took place on April 16 in Vera Cruz, Mexico. Torres, 31, the reigning super flyweight champion from Mexico City moved up in weight to challenge Nava, 31, the reigning super bantamweight world champion from Tijuana. It was the most anticipated fight of the year and did not disappoint. Those who saw the fight watched in awe as a furious back and forth struggle, in which both women showcased their skills and determination, ultimately ended in a draw. They fought again on July 30 with Torres winning the rematch.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Round nine between Tijuana's Jackie Nava (25-4-3, 11 KOs) and Mexico City's Ana Maria Torres (27-3-3, 15 KOs) on April 16, in their first encounter, was pretty amazing. After eight rounds of already furious action, both connected with big blows and refused to back off. Head-snapping right hands from Torres were met with powerful left hooks by Nava. Fans couldn't help but stand up when the round ended.

KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

Ava Knight's one-punch knockout of IBF flyweight titleholder Arely Mucino (14-1-1, 8 KOs) was both scintillating and frightening. Knight (7-1-3, 4 KOs) ventured to Colima, Mexico, on October 29 to fight Mucino in her native country and mowed down the reigning champion with a left uppercut. Mucino never saw it coming and was left unconscious for more than a minute. Knight, 23, fights out of Oakland, California.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

It was one of the biggest shocks of the year when France's Anne Sophie Mathis (26-1, 22 KOs) traveled to New Mexico to fight Holly Holm (30-2-3, 9 KOs) and floored the hometown girl more than once to win by knockout. Mathis used her power to beat up and finally stop Holm, who had not lost a fight in seven years. Few expected Mathis to win in New Mexico on Dec. 3. A close second in this category was Australia's Diana Prazak's TKO win over Canada's hard-hitting Lindsay Garbatt.

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

It was a traumatic 12 months for former champion Christy "The Coalminer's Daughter" Martin (49-6-3, 31 KOs). After being shot and stabbed by her former husband in November 2010, she returned to the sport she loves and fought Dakota Stone (10-8-5, 2 KOs) at the Staples Center in June. During the fight she suffered a broken right arm and continued to fight until the referee stopped the action. Fans were visibly impressed by the grit 43-year-old Martin showed for not only her performance but her overcoming bullet and stab wounds within a mere seven-month span.

EVENT OF THE YEAR

San Jose, Costa Rica held a female-dominated fight card in its massive soccer stadium on March 31. More than 18,000 fans showed up to watch Hanna Gabriel, Melinda Cooper, Ada Velez, Stacey Reile, Dahiana Santana and Melisenda Perez perform. Celebrities and the Costa Rican president attended the festivities that saw women's boxing at its best.

PROSPECT OF THE YEAR

Arely Valente, 18, of Mexico City reeled off six victories in 2011, including three knockouts. The flyweight prizefighter could be that country's future star.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

Mick Hargraves of Australia gets the nod for guiding Diana Prazak (9-1, 7 KOs) to the junior lightweight world title on Sept. 24 in Victoria, Australia. A ninth-round technical knockout win over dangerous Lindsay Garbatt (7-4-1) by Prazak was one of the year's major upsets.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Brian Cohen deserves accolades for picking up the gauntlet to guide women's boxing. The Pennsylvania-based Cohen took on the contracts of Melissa Hernandez (16-2-3) who fought three times in 2011 and Ronica Jeffrey (8-0) who fought four times. Hernandez is a former world champion and one of the best in women's boxing. Jeffrey looks to be a "can't miss" future world titleholder. ■

THE ROAD TO LONDON

THE RING WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE OLYMPIC TEAM OF ONE NATION EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH: CUBA

By: **Norm Frauenheim**

Cuba has been to Olympic boxing what Brazil has been to soccer's World Cup. The Cubans have been a standard, a defining force for nearly four decades. Yet now they are in an unfamiliar fight to re-occupy the medal stand's top pedestal at London's 2012 Games.

Put it this way: American swimmer Michael Phelps, history's record-setting gold medalist in 2008, stood there eight more times than any single Cuban boxer did four years ago.

A mix of reasons explains why Cuba fell from its accustomed perch at the Beijing Olympics.

In a flight to money instead of medals, defections from a Communist-locked island drained the pool of fighters best suited to win gold. Before the Cubans even landed in China, junior welterweight Erislandy Lara and featherweight Yuriorkis Gamboa, two of the best, were fighting for Oscar De La Hoya and Bob Arum instead of Fidel Castro, who outlawed pro sports in 1962.

There also have been changes in a system famed, feared and once known for heavyweights Teófilo Stevenson and Felix Savón. Gone is legendary coach Alcides Sagarra, who is to Cuba what Pelé is to Brazil. Sagarra retired in 2001.

Sagarra's influence was still evident in 2004. At those Olympics, the medal stand was for the Cubans a bit like the Parthenon, the ancient Greek temple that overlooks Athens from a high plateau at the city's center. Every time you looked up, there was another Cuban with a gold medal. They won five of the 11 weight classes, bringing their gold medal count since the 1972 Munich Games to 32 – a reign that includes two Cuban boycotts, 1984 and 1988.

In China, however, it came to an abrupt end. The Cubans still won eight medals, four silver and four

Roniel Iglesias will try to improve upon the bronze medal he won at the 2008 Olympics.

Image: **Getty Images**

Lazaro Alvarez won bantamweight gold medals in both the Pan American Games and World Championships in 2011.

Image: **Getty Images**

bronze. In any other country, that would have been celebrated, especially in the United States, which won only a single bronze. But this was Cuba, the franchise.

Then-coach Pedro Roque called the Beijing Games a learning experience for a team younger than most in a storied history built on more mature fighters. They were men-against-boys in earlier Olympics, because of laws that prohibited them from moving on and into the punch-for-pay ranks. To wit: Stevenson won three gold medals – 1972, 1976 and 1980. Savón also won three—1992, 1996 and 2000.

Roque told Cuban media that he believes Beijing provided the seasoning their decorated fathers had and later generations lost in defections that began in 1991 with heavyweight Jorge Luis González and have continued since gold-medalist Joel Casamayor snuck out of a 1996 training camp in Guadalajara, Mexico, and jumped onto a bus headed for the United States, where he won pro titles at super featherweight and lightweight.

Months before the opening ceremonies in London, it's hard to argue with Roque's projection. A Cuban comeback looks possible. Some, in fact, predict a resumption of Cuban dominance.

"It won't even be close," said Luis De Cubas Jr., the pro manager for six of the former Cubans, including Casamayor and Lara.

A big reason for the Cuban resurrection, says De Cubas, rests in the potent hands of Roniel Iglesias, the 2009 world amateur champion and a 2008 Olympic bronze medalist at 64 kilograms (141 pounds). Iglesias, now 23, would be today's best junior welterweight prospect if he had jumped to the pros after Beijing. Americans Jose Benavidez Jr. of Phoenix and Frankie Gomez of Los Angeles are thought to be Nos. 1 and 2 in the current 140-pound class. In the finals at the 2009 World Championships in Milan, Italy, Iglesias beat Gomez by what appears to be a one-sided score, 8-2.

"As a pro, he destroys Frankie Gomez," said De Cubas, whose father, Luis De Cubas Sr., managed González's disappointing career and also represented Cuban baseball players in major-league negotiations.

Iglesias has never fought Benavidez. Doesn't matter, says De Cubas.

"He destroys Benavidez, too," he said.

But there was an alarm in September at the 2011 World Championship in Baku, Azerbaijan. Iglesias lost for only the second time in three years, falling to Ukrainian Denys Berinchyk in the preliminaries. But in a sign – both

of his potential and Cuba's possible comeback – a re-committed Iglesias stormed through the Pan American field in October for regional gold in Guadalajara.

It sounds as if Iglesias' commitment to Olympic gold has been firmly in place ever since he returned from Beijing with a bronze medal that offered no consolation for his loss to Manus Boonjumnong of Thailand. He got his hair cut with Olympic Rings shaved onto his head.

"I hope to take revenge this time," Iglesias told the Cuban media.

Only after London will De Cubas learn if, when or how Iglesias might make the jump and defect to the pros.

"I only know that when they come to this country, they come to me," said De Cubas, who currently lives in Las Vegas. "Most would love to turn pro. But it's a difficult decision, very hard to do. They have to leave family, the people and life they know. They grew up in that Communist system. It's in their brain.

"That adjustment can be tough. Look at Lara. Even in boxing, he's still trying to deal with getting robbed in that loss (by majority decision last July in Atlantic City, N.J.) to Paul Williams."

Despite political change in Cuba and the defections, De Cubas said there's the great tradition and still great interest in boxing throughout the island nation.

"Thousands of kids from the different provinces and cities participate in five national tournaments every year," he said.

For De Cubas, that means more prospects and a Cuban return to the top of the medal stand. He is convinced they will dominate again.

"Haven't they always?" he said.

ALSO, KEEP AN EYE ON ...

Bantamweight Lazaro Alvarez is only 20, which means his potential is just beginning to emerge. He wraps up 2011 with two gold medals, one in September at the World Championships and another in October at the Pan-American Games. Thus far, Alvarez has been an effective counter-puncher. In London, it's fair to predict that he will have added much more to his attack.

Light heavyweight Julio César la Cruz, at 22, is not much older than Alvarez. But he has the kind experience that can motivate. He failed to qualify for the Beijing Games. That was the first time Cuba wasn't represented in every weight class. Since then, César la Cruz has been fighting as though he wants to make amends. Like Alvarez, he won a 2011 world championship and Pan-Am gold with the fast hands and footwork that are Cuban trademarks. ■

CUBA IN OLYMPICS

HOW CUBA FARED IN BOXING AT THE 2008 GAMES:

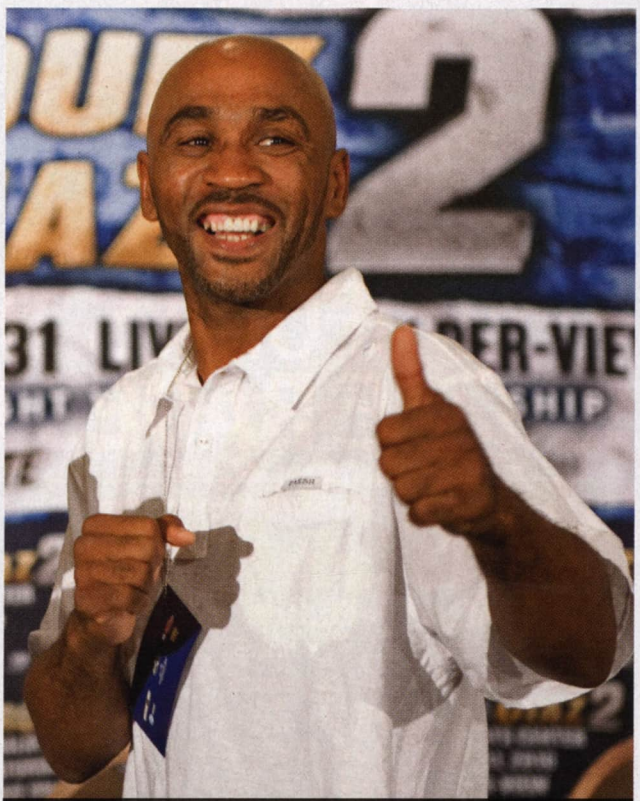
GOLD	0
SILVER	4
BRONZE	4
TOTAL:	8

MOST MEDALS BY COUNTRY

CUBA	8
CHINA	4
FIVE TIED AT	3

ALL-TIME OLYMPICS
LEADING MEDAL WINNERS BY COUNTRY

U.S.	108
CUBA	63
SOVIET UNION	51
GREAT BRITAIN	48
ITALY	44



Joel Casamayor was the bantamweight gold medalist for Cuba in the 1992 Games. Image: **Fightwireimages**

SPADAFORA'S TRAGIC BATTLE RAGES ON

By: **Don Stradley** / Images: **Gary Sarti / Emily Harney / Fightwireimages**

Paul Spadafora was supposed to headline a fight card at one of the Las Vegas hotels in January or February. With due respect to the Soaring Eagle Casino in Mount Pleasant, Mich., a main event in Las Vegas sounded great. Spadafora has spent five years under the radar, fighting obscure opponents in obscure locations, trying to rebuild a career that fell apart long ago. His last bout was a step up, a fifth round stoppage of Alain Hernandez at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut. He looked good. He's still undefeated in 46 bouts. But the front money for Las Vegas never came through, and as of press time the whole thing looked dead.

Spadafora's promoter, Mike Acri, isn't talking. A few years ago Acri was crowing that he had resurrected Roberto Duran and Hector Camacho late in their careers, and he vowed to do the same for Spadafora. After all, there was a time just about a decade ago when Spadafora was a promising lightweight titleholder with dates on HBO. Some of his early reputation was based on a sparring gig with Floyd Mayweather Jr. It was just a gym session, but Spadafora looked sharp, like he belonged in there.

Nevertheless, it wasn't easy to market a guy with Spadafora's past. Who knows what demon wind was blowing that night in 2003 when a drunken Spadafora shot his pregnant girlfriend. She lived, but Spadafora was found guilty of aggravated assault and locked up for a while. He behaved himself in prison and was cut loose early. He acknowledged his alcoholism. He attended AA meetings. He listened to the scary stories. Maybe he shared his own. The woman forgave him. She had his child. But Spadafora's career had been knocked off the rails.

He has fought sporadically since his release from prison in 2006. He has given a few interviews about his love for boxing, how glad he is to be sober and how his children inspire him. With a bullet scar on his leg from a police shootout in his youth, and the words HARD TIMES tattooed across his narrow torso, Spadafora seems like one of those hard-bitten characters that Johnny Cash used to sing about. His pale body is covered with black images representing key moments in his life, including several about the evils of alcohol. The effect is creepy – by now the tattoos are melding together, like old artwork melting in a museum fire – but Spadafora calls it therapeutic. Pernell Whitaker

Paul Spadafora has always gotten the job done in the ring. His biggest challenges have come outside of it.

Image: **Emily Harney / Fightwireimages**

came aboard as his trainer. It was a good story: Whitaker, a great fighter nearly felled by his own cocaine habit, helping the alcoholic Spadafora return to boxing. But the comeback had holes in it. Spadafora couldn't stay out of trouble. In 2008 he did a 75-day stint in jail for a parole violation.

It looked like our man might catch a break last March when Mayweather floated Spadafora's name as a possible opponent. When Victor Ortiz got the call, Spadafora's name went back into the slush pile. On Sept. 22, 2011, Spadafora was popped for driving 66 mph in a 40 mph zone. After failing a sobriety test, he refused to have his blood checked for alcohol levels.

The incident was just days after Mayweather fought Ortiz. Maybe seeing Ortiz get the fight had an effect on Spadafora. Maybe that's what made him backslide. Or maybe it takes less than that. As he said in a 2006 interview, "When I have alcohol in my system, I'm not the right person to be around."

Spadafora's supporters say he's as disciplined as a samurai when he's training. But it's been more than a year since his last fight. That's a long time to be alone with your addiction. Considering his past history – he's been shot and has shot someone, and was drunk both times – a DUI is not the worst that could've happened. Some might say he wanted to be caught.

Spadafora is 36 now. We see guys like him everywhere, careworn characters hunching their shoulders against the wind. They are weary, misunderstood and a little fearful. By the time you read this, Acri might have found a fight for him. And Acri will boast again about his ability to breathe new life into aging fighters. And maybe Spadafora will win. And then it will start all over again. His name will be mentioned by a Bob Arum or a Mayweather, and the old You Tube clips will start to get more hits, and he'll pull himself together for a while. The color will return to his cheeks. But at some point, Spadafora will no longer have boxing to provide a buffer between him and his dark side. Boxing careers end.

That may be on his mind these days as he gathers his will for a last stand. ■

AT THE FIGHTS

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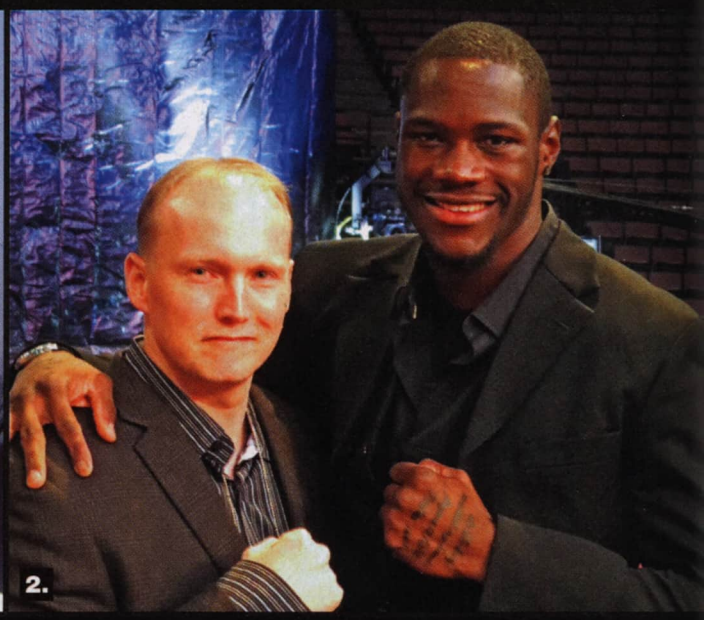
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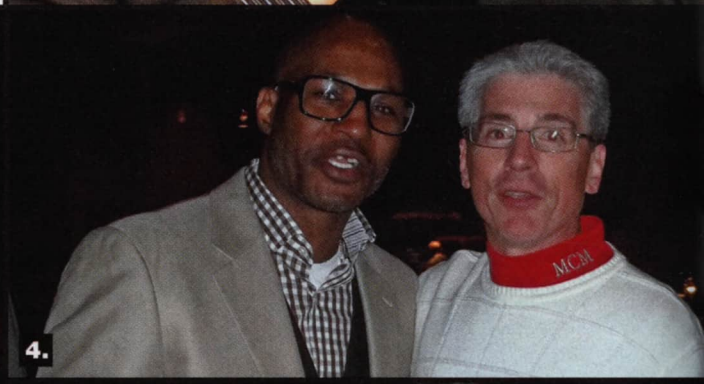

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1. Elias Alarcon with Marco Antonio Barrera at the Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.-Sebastian Zbik weigh-in in Los Angeles **2.** Aaron Lloyd with heavyweight Deontay Wilder at the Adrien Broner-Martin Rodriguez fight in Cincinnati **3.** Katrina McCloud with Paul Williams at the Amir Khan-Lamont Peterson fight in Washington, D.C. **4.** Mark McCloud with Bernard Hopkins at the Khan-Peterson fight **5.** Luis P. Gallegos (right) and Armando Gallegos flank Hall of Famer Ricardo Lopez at the Jhonny Gonzalez-Rogers Mtagwa fight in El Paso, Texas.

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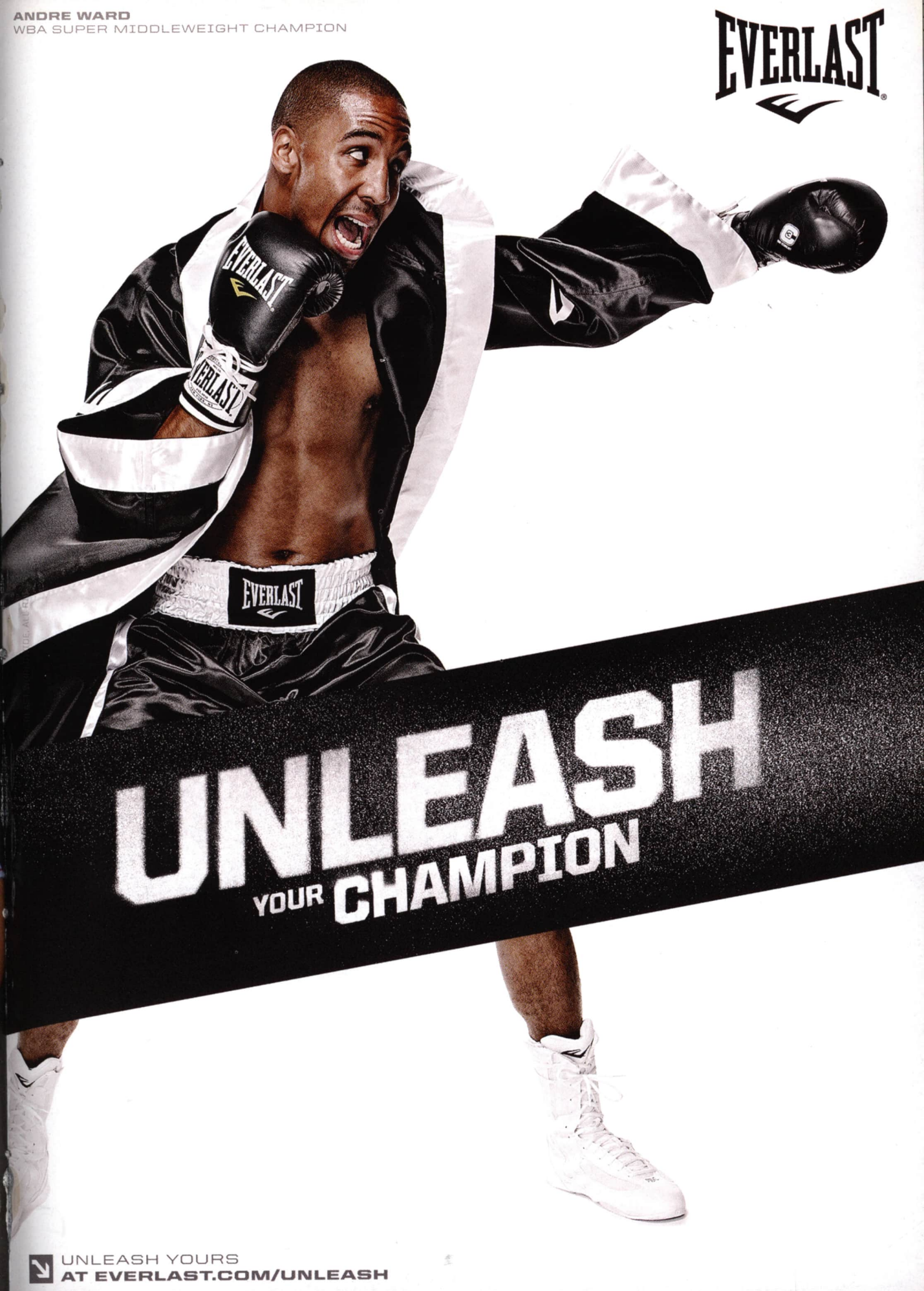
Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to **celebrityphotos@sepublications.com.** Make sure to include your name(s), celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!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